



# 오크지만 잔양해

이정민  
판타지 장편소설

1

몬스터

# Praise the Orc!

– 오크지만 찬양해! –

- Volume 2 -

-Author-  
Lee Jungmin

# **CHAPTER 26**

## **GOODBYE ORCROX (1)**

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Ian disconnected.

He went to the kitchen and drank cold water. It was dawn, so the apartment was quiet. He checked on Yiyu and went outside. There was a park next to the river. He walked along the promenade as the cold air chilled his body.

He was confused. Lenox died. Hoyt died. Gulda died. All of the great warriors that he had known had died. Even after disconnecting, these unknown feelings didn't disappear. The cold air didn't dissipate them.

The NPCs in Elder Lord had an artificial intelligence. If their thoughts and emotions were merely flashing numbers and data in the form of electronic signals, weren't they like trapped human brains? He couldn't blame himself for being so immersed in the game.

Lenox was Ian's mentor. Hoyt taught him about death. He learned a lot from them. They were more honest than the humans in the real world, more honorable and honest than anyone he had ever met. He could never be like them.

Ian raised a hand to his face. It was confusing. He couldn't find the answer.

Suddenly, he saw something in the distance. It was some children having a dispute. They looked like runaway teenagers. A group of high school students were beating another child for unknown reasons. The kid who was being beaten fell to the ground.

Ian tried to pass by. He didn't want to get involved in anything unrelated to himself.

The kids discovered Ian passing by and glared threateningly at him. Ian kept moving as he glanced at them with uncaring eyes. It was at that moment.

'Are you alive?"

'Why?"

‘Is it because you are breathing?’

He recalled that voice. Ian stopped walking. His breathing became rough. Like a hallucination, Lenox’s voice rang in his ears.

‘You are breathing! That doesn’t mean you are living!’

Ian turned his head. The runaway youths were talking to the kid.

“Hey, I told you to bring the money. Didn’t you listen? Do I have to search for it?”

“If you don’t have money then sell your body, you mad woman.”

Why was the world filled with tiresome things like this? Many of the targets he killed had committed commonplace evil. Why did he put a bullet in their heads, regardless of the innocent or the wicked? If reality was filled with so much malice then why were heroes such as Lenox and Hoyt hiding?

‘Bul’tar!’

Ian approached.

The youths looked at Ian. There were two girls and five boys. He didn’t know what they originally looked like since all of them had dyed hair and piercings. A large boy with yellow hair said, “You should’ve just walked away instead of meddling in our business, Mister.”

“Your interference will be in vain.” Another boy said.

Ian decided not to talk with them. He struck the yellow haired boy. Ian’s foot hit his solar plexus. As the yellow haired boy held his breath and bent over, Ian grabbed his head and tripped him, kicking him in the abdomen.

“Keook!”

One person was overwhelmed in a short amount of time. The rest rushed at Ian. He used inertia to drop one to the ground. The back of the head was hit softly so that the kid wouldn’t die.

Then he responded to a low-kick with another low kick. Their kicks hit each other at

the same time. However, the other person was the one who collapsed in pain. The previous boy crawled across the ground and grabbed his legs. Ian kicked his abdomen.

He avoided a flying fist and hit the person in the chin. The opponent's legs were twisted and he fell down.

Now there was only one left. The remaining boy didn't dare attack alone. The girls trembled with open mouths.

Ian gestured with his chin. The children understood the meaning and rushed over to their friends. They hurriedly lifted their stunned friends and ran away. Ian looked after them and longed for a cigarette. He had always smoked a cigarette after a battle.

Ian stretched out his hand.

"Are you okay?"

The child who was beaten stared at him blankly. She looked at Ian's hand with hesitation from where she was sitting down.

"...Thank you..."

She took Ian's hand.

"T... Thank you..."

Ian looked at the girl's condition. She would need to apply some ointment. Her lips were bleeding, but she was still pretty. Ian thought for a moment.

"Are you a student?"

"Dropout..."

"Your age?"

"...18..."

She slightly moved backwards. It seemed like she suspected ulterior motives. Ian didn't care. This might be fate.

“Do you have a job?”

“Huh?”

“You, do you want a part time job?”



Han Yeori was in a bad mood. As a part time worker at Cafe Reason, she believed that there was a partnership between her and the boss. But her boss betrayed her and hired a new part-timer without consulting her. It was even a woman. Not only that, she was a pretty girl who had dropped out of school.

“Excuse me... Unni?”

Han Yeori replied, “Yes.”

“Did you originally do work like this...?”

“Of course. To be a barista, you need to be able to do at least this much.”

“Still, there is a lot of writing...”

“.....”

“It’s nothing...”

Ian left the training to Han Yeori. For the time being, he was going to reduce the amount of time he worked at the cafe. Then he met a girl during his dawn walk. Han Yeori would teach her well.

Ian watched [Elder Lord Times] on his tablet.

*-The last Essence grade item has been sold at the Items Valley Auction for a huge 100 million won.*

*-100 million won is huge, but it isn’t a surprise in Elder Lord. The record for the most high profile item at the Items Valley was one billion.*

*-Due to these things, the number of people viewing Elder Lord as a business has*

*increased. Most of them are rankers. Rankers alone are paid a tremendous amount of money from Elder Saga Corporation, based on their achievement points.*

The so-called rankings were calculated using the achievement points. Their rank was decided by how many points they accumulated in Elder Lord, and Elder Saga Corporation paid a grant to the top rankers.

Elder Saga's periodic deposits, item sales, sponsorship support, and the video royalty fees! Depending on their skill level, they could also participate in broadcasts and advertising. Becoming a ranker in Elder Lord meant becoming a star.

“Rankers...”

Ian's eyes shone. That's right. Ian decided to work harder in Elder Lord. He currently didn't have any financial problems, but the more money he had, the better. Ian hired a student to work part-time in the cafe and he planned to earn extra income through Elder Lord.

However, that didn't mean that he would become like the other players.

*-This time, the role playing militia leader, Kim Dalkwang is with us.*

*-Hello. I am Kim Dalkwang.*

*-Kim Dalkwang-ssi wanted to give an interview about Elder Lord.*

*-Yes. I am the militia leader, Kim Dalkwang. I don't think of Elder Lord as a game.*

*-Does that mean you feel like Elder Lord is reality?*

*-Look at the NPCs. I spend all day with the NPCs, but I've never once felt awkward. I even thought about whether or not Elder Lord is a connection to another world. It is a fully implemented new world.*

*-I am worried about whether there will be any effect on reality in the future.*

*-I don't think that is the case. However, I am doing my best to become Kim Dalkwang of Elder Lord. I'm enjoying the game. I have my own way. In that sense, I hate the term 'role-play.' I am sincere and it isn't just an act.*

Ian was able to understand the user called Kim Dalkwang. He had lived with the orc warriors and became influenced by them. If Ian hadn't played Elder Lord, then Yoo Sooyeon would be learning from Han Yeori here. He would've left her and continued on his way, just like on the battlefield.

Ian was deep in thought as he changed the channel. Hot videos were being played. Ian looked at the No. 1. video.

"Uh...?"

Ian's face stiffened and his hands started trembling. The name of the video was 'Boss Mob Raid', and the protagonist of the video was a face that Ian would never forget. The NPC was the boss mob of Orcrox Fortress, Lenox.

The process of luring the legendary warrior from Orcrox and then killing him was completely filmed.

The battle scene appeared. The orc warriors rushed in unison. It was a terrible impact. Even though their numbers were much smaller, the orc warriors slayed the human soldiers with fearful combat power.

Lenox's angry assault in the front was unrivaled, sweeping away the humans like they were fallen leaves. However, the NPC called Earl came to the front and the orcs collapsed under the combined attacks from the magicians.

The user shooting the video giggled.

*-You have to use your heads, stupid orcs.*

Lenox glared at him, his cool gaze facing the camera. The hearts of those watching felt cold.

*-Now, the Orcrox boss mob will die. Look.*

The person filming withdrew and the NPC Earl came forward. The earl raised his sword. Lenox swung his axe at him. Both weapons hit each other. The fierce battle continued for a while. The movements were so fast that they weren't even visible.

Eventually, the earl was pushed back. Lenox kicked the earl and the earl fell down. The moment that Lenox's axe was about to descend...

A knight stabbed Lenox in the back. The blade pierced through his body. Lenox gritted his teeth. He gathered his strength and tried to kill the earl.

Another knight stabbed Lenox.

-Kuhuk...!

Blood poured out from Lenox's mouth. The humans continued to stab Lenox without stopping. Within a short time, Lenox was on his knees.

Hoyt, Gulda, Kinjur and the numerous warriors collapsed from the human weapons.

The user taking the video explained,

*-The raid was successful. Simple right? It isn't difficult to use NPCs. Just use your heads during the quests. This was the raid video of the Thawing Balhae Clan, who are aiming to become the best in Elder Lord.*

Then he captured the body of Lenox lying on the ground with his eyes still open. The word 'Successful!' was edited onto the video and then it ended.

The reaction was explosive.

They praised the Thawing Balhae clan for killing Lenox, who was thought to be impossible to defeat. They did something that foreign clans couldn't do, and were praised by the Koreans. There were a lot of opinions to eradicate the dirty orcs.

Ian felt something churning inside him. He unconsciously struck the tablet with the palm of his hand. The screen was touched and the channel changed back.

It was the [Elder Lord Times] interview with Kim Dalkwang.

*-Everyone who causes a dispute in the city, whether they are NPCs or users, will be equally arrested. I am a militia member before I am a user. In the process, many comedic scenes were produced...*

The Thawing Balhae Clan. He would remember that. He also had a picture of the users who didn't know about the situation and judged the good and evil in advance.

Ian's life was peaceful. Ever since he left the military, he served guests at the cafe and

spent his everyday life with Yiyu. It was a continuation of a relaxing everyday life, rather than trying to achieve a goal.

But now Ian had a job to do.

God had decided to distort his face. He would show them what an orc warrior was.

The voice of the militia leader, Kim Dalkwang, continued flowing from the tablet.

*-In any case, if a user or NPC does something wrong, then they should be arrested. There are no exceptions.*

# **CHAPTER 27**

## **GOODBYE ORCROX (2)**

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Candles shone in the darkness. Tashaquil closed his eyes as he mumbled and recited an old language. The fires of the candles shook in accordance with his whispers.

Ian was sitting in front of Tashaquil and listening to his voice. His mind was elevated, as if he were hypnotized. The spirit floated in the air beyond the constraints of the body.

“Artani mokaw dom de quakwa bul’tar misaterioak... De’sar quak kisame ilxone qfwfq...”

A bizarre echo shook Ian. Ian’s spirit sank down into the depths as it followed Tashaquil’s voice.

At some point, Ian became surrounded by darkness. In the darkness, two lights turned towards Ian.

Ian looked around. There were no candles, no Tashaquil, nothing. There were only two eyes staring at him in the darkness. Ian faced it. The moment that their eyes met, Ian felt like his soul was being sucked in, and formed a fist to resist it. He felt many minds converging endlessly.

Ian gritted his teeth. At that moment, many lights appeared at once. Two, four, eight, sixteen pairs of eyes. Then dozens and hundreds of eyes gazed at Ian. Their outlines were revealed.

Ian’s eyes widened. It was the faces of the warriors. Ian spotted Leyteno holding a greatsword. He also saw Gloin with an axe. The great warriors from the Hall of Fame, and many other orc warriors were watching Ian.

He then looked at the person closest to him.

Lenox. Lenox whispered to Ian. Ian focused on listening to him. However, Lenox’s voice was inaudible. Ian shook his head. Lenox smiled and spoke again. Ian still had no idea.

Lenox nodded. Then Ian extended a fist. It was a rough hand covered with the wounds of battle. Ian's fist bumped into Lenox's heavy fist.

At that moment, the world turned dark again.

.....

Ian opened his eyes. He was in front of Tashaquil.

Tashaquil whispered, "Young orc, what are you seeking?"

Ian's head became blank. Only one word surfaced and filled his head. It was engraved into his mind.

Honor.

"What do you want to achieve?"

Honor.

"Why do you walk the path of a warrior?"

Tashaquil looked at Ian, his two eyes staring deeply into Ian's soul. Ian couldn't move his body, he couldn't even part his lips. One word appeared in his head, and it was his only answer.

Honor.

His face and body became numb. Heat slammed into Ian. Ian's face distorted, but he endured the pain. He stared at Tashaquil without bending his waist.

Honor.

Tashaquil whispered,

"Then look into yourself. I am the hawk of the north, the blue guardian of the sunrise. The pale blue standard bearer who guides the shamans, Tashaquil. Warrior, who is beginning your long journey. What is your name?"

Ian tried to answer with his name. But his mouth didn't seem to move. Instead, a

strange sound echoed through his mind. It was a word he had heard for the first time.

Tashaquil stared into Ian's eyes. He smiled like he knew everything.

All the lights went out.

"Remember that name."

Tashaquil rose from his position. It was a ceremony that seemed to be over in an instant, but also felt like it took a long time. Ian couldn't guess how much time had passed. His whole body soaked with sweat.

Tashaquil walked up to a window. That cloth that blocked the sun was removed. Sunlight entered Ian's eyes.

The ceremony to become a warrior was over. Ian was now a warrior.

Tashaquil gave something to Ian. It was a mirror. Ian looked at himself in the mirror.

His appearance differed from before. The tattoos symbolizing an orc warrior ran from his face down to his body. He could feel an unknown power running through the tattoos towards the inside of his body.

Tashaquil spoke, "Young warrior."

He was in deep sorrow after the death of Lenox, but his eyes were still clear. Lenox might be the one who trained the warriors, but Tashaquil always conducted the ceremony that turned them into warriors. He was the guide who revealed the way.

"What is your name?"

At that point, a nostalgic voice came to mind.

'Become a warrior! Then you will receive a new name! So I won't remember your name!'

Ian replied.

"My name is..."

Lenox's voice rang in his ears.

'Become a warrior!'



The remains of the orc warriors were collected from the dungeon. Surprisingly, Hoyt survived.

Hoyt had been found bloodied among the bodies of the other orc warriors. The orcs thought he was dead. But when they lifted his body to move it, they found that he was faintly breathing. He had collapsed and his mind still wasn't recovered. Even though he was alive, he was unconscious, and wouldn't be able to move for a while. According to the shamans, he wouldn't wake up for a while.

The funeral for the warriors was solemnly held. Orcs from around the continent gathered as a last tribute to Lenox. Well known orcs, those who lived in seclusion, and other legendary orcs appeared.

The hunter Zankus, who shot down the sun, was the first to arrive. He was followed by the mountain smasher Kumarak, the abyss shaman Wallachwi, Anya the mad slaughterer and many other strong orcs. Those who came to express their condolences continued without end.

The funeral hymns echoed around Orcrox. Lenox's steel helmet was left at the training grounds where he always yelled. He would watch over the warriors there forever.

### [Status Window]

'Person Pursuing the Pinnacle' Ian, Orc Warrior

Level: 16

Achievement Points: 2420

Assimilation: 70%<sup>1</sup>

Abilities:

Orc Warrior's Strength (Special)

Orc Warrior's Recovery (Special)

Leyteno's Greatsword Technique (Rare)

Indomitable Fighting Spirit (Rare)

Mind's Eye (Special)

Tattoos of Honor (Rare)

There were a lot of changes.

As soon as Ian escaped through the dungeon's emergency exit, he found the body of the lich. The soldiers left in the rear had killed the lich. Their blades turned towards Ian.

However, Ian exerted an incredible power and killed them. He couldn't remember what happened but he had ended up covered in blood. He recalled seeing the message windows flash faintly as the assimilation rate rose.

By the time he recovered his spirit, he was a bloody mess in front of Orcrox Fortress. His skills proficiency, level and achievement points had risen significantly.

First, all his basic abilities had risen and Orc's Greatsword Technique had gone up two stages to become the rare grade Leyteno's Greatsword Technique. In addition, tattoos were engraved after the warrior's ceremony was over and the rare grade ability, Tattoos of Honor, was acquired. The exact abilities of this skill were still unknown.

Now Ian felt strong enough to be called a warrior.

Ian had to leave Orcrox Fortress. His first goal was to find Thawing Balhae Clan and the traitor Grom. The human magician had called him Hyunchul. They were now Ian's target.

However, he was still lacking strength. He would leave Orcrox, build up his power, and pay them back.

"I will get revenge on the human earl," Anya the mad slaughterer said.

She was a berserk orc. Anja had a group of orc warriors who only followed her. All of them were bloodthirsty killers like her.

The mountain smasher Kumarak agreed. "I will help."

"I don't need an over-sized idiot like you."

"I'm not an idiot, Anya! Grrung!"

They didn't know much about those who were cursed by the stars. So when Ian said that he would punish the traitor Grom, they doubted Ian's power.

"I wonder if a new warrior can do it."

Tashaquil shook his head at the hunter Zankus' question. "He received Lenox's teachings and watched his last moments. He is qualified."

"Hmm..."

"I will guarantee it."

"I understand. But..." Zankus smiled as he looked at Ian. "I will hunt you down if you play stupid games. I can't trust a person who ran away alone."

"Zankus."

Tashaquil barked but Ian nodded quietly.

"I understand."

Everybody dealt with sorrow in their own way. All of them were orcs who had large or small debts to Lenox.

It was determined that Hoyt would be the instructor after Lenox. After he recovered, he would take Lenox's place. That is, if Hoyt didn't refuse the position.

After the others left, Tashaquil and Ian were left alone.

“Where will you go now?”

“I will first stop at Anail.”

He had to meet Thompson in Anail. He had received a letter stating that the Golden Anvil clan had completed the greatsword. Ian was going to visit Anail first to recover it.

In addition, there was someone else he had to see. Derek. Ian hated him, but decided to borrow his strength for the more important mission. He needed the help of an NPC who had power.

“I will track those guys until the end.”

“Good luck.”

Tashaquil waved his staff. An unknown blessing filled Ian.

[Tashaquil has granted you an unknown power.]

[The unidentified power will settle within your body.]

“This...?”

“One day it will help you.”

Tashaquil smiled.

“When will you leave?”

Ian looked at the sky. The sun hadn’t fallen yet. It was time to leave before Lenox’s funeral was over.

“I’m going to leave now.”

“So fast.”

"It is like Lenox always said." Ian recalled his face. "I can enjoy my life, or swing my weapon now."

A bittersweet smile spread over Tashaquil's face.

"I will depart now."

"Then I wish you luck."

Ian and Tashaquil bumped fists.

He crossed the interior of Orcrox Fortress. It was in Orcrox Fortress where many things had happened. The exit of the fortress could be seen.

When he first connected to Elder Lord, he never expected all this to happen. He just lightly enjoyed the game.

But he met Lenox here. Grant and Hoyt as well. He met Antuak, and then Tashaquil. Ian grew even further through his relationship with them. They had great spirits that were worthy of respect.

As soon as Ian left Orcrox Fortress, familiar faces welcomed him.

"Hey, are you alive?"

"I am alive."

The guards of Orcrox Fortress. They were the orcs whom he had first met. They still guarded Orcrox Fortress like stone statues.

"You are finally a warrior!"

"Yes."

"It feels like it was just a while ago that you acted like a newbie here."

"Now you look like a warrior. Kulkulkul!"

They burst out laughing. Ian also laughed. They glanced at each other before saying to Ian,

“Well. Now it is time to ask you.”

They extended their fists side by side.

“Young warrior leaving Orcrox.”

“Yes.”

“What is your name?”

The guards had never once asked for Ian’s name. Lenox was also the same. He finally realized the reason why. At that time, Ian had no name. But now that he was a warrior, Ian had a name that he could tell them.

“My name is...”

He took a deep breath before replying.

“Crockta.”

They nodded. It was a farewell.

Crockta bumped fists with them.

# **CHAPTER 28**

## **PROPOSAL THAT CAN'T BE REJECTED (1)**

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The orc farmers gathered at the home of Agra, the spiritual pillar of the orc farmers.

It was a meeting to resolve the present problem.

Many orc farmers had left their homes for Lenox's funeral, and the ones who returned were greeted with messed up fields and broken farm equipment. Some orcs left in the village were either injured or killed.

They figured it out. The farmers were engulfed with fear after realizing that it was back.

The return of the mutant werewolf.

Grant, who was once a warrior, had remained in Orcrox to protect Lenox for a certain amount of time after death. The remaining orc farmers were unable to cope with the brutal attacks of the mutant werewolf.

His group wasn't made up of just wolves anymore, but a bunch of direwolves that had come down from the north. The orc farmers struggled to get rid of them. However, the number of casualties increased in the guerrilla warfare against the wolves.

It was a crisis.

"If this continues, then it will be the end."

"We need to request help from the orc warriors at Orcrox!"

"But this area has already been taken over by them. Anyone who tries to leave will be attacked."

"If all of us go out together..."

"The children. We can't leave the children alone."

“It will be more dangerous to take the children.”

“Then what should we do?”

“At this time...”

Due to Lenox’s funeral, there were no warriors passing by. The orc farmers sighed.

As they gathered and tried to seek answers, the wolves were conducting a raid.

“Help! Help me!”

“This voice...?”

It was the voice of a young orc child. The orc farmers looked out the window. A young orc was being chased by the wolves. He was staggering and bleeding from where he had been bitten several times on his legs.

“This...!”

Big direwolves were chasing behind the little orc. Their angry teeth were only minutes away from tearing into the child. The orc farmers ran out the door without hesitation.

But it was a trap.

“.....!”

As the orc farmers ran out to save the child, a large number of direwolves emerged from the bushes and rocks. A wolf who was especially large looked at them and laughed.

“Dirty orc scum... Today I will eat all of you...”

The wolf spoke. His face was marked with a long scar. It was the old mutant wolf that had been attacked by Grant.

He returned even stronger. Bigger and smarter. He returned to the north and brought back not just wolves, but direwolves as well.

The orcs gritted their teeth. They might all die. They looked back. The little orcs left in

Agra's house were peeking out of a gap in the door with frightened faces.

"Close the door and hide!"

The farmers picked up some farming equipment and weapons. They glared at the werewolf as the wolves gradually surrounded them. The farmers didn't know how to fight, but they were still orcs. The mutant werewolf looked at them and chuckled at the sight, like it was funny. Then he bit the young orc that had been chased.

"Aaaagh!"

The farmers were furious.

"Let that child go!"

"Kukukuku..."

The child slumped down as blood flowed from the bite on their arm. They had lost consciousness from the shock. The orcs' hands started shaking.

"Don't be mad. You will follow soon."

The mutant werewolf laughed at the body of the young orc on the ground. Then he howled towards the sky.

"Awoooo..."

"Awooooooo..."

The mutant werewolf's body started changing. His muscles swelled like balloons. His front legs rose up, hind legs became stronger and his back straightened. The larger wolf laughed as he looked down at the orcs. A huge bipedal werewolf!

"Today I will eat orc meat."

"T-That..."

"Don't worry. Young meat tastes better. Kuku..."

"This bastard...!"

The orc farmers raised their weapons. They trembled as they glared at the werewolf. The werewolf yelled,

“Pounce!”

The wolves and the mutant werewolf plunged in at the same time. The orcs also rushed to their deaths. The farmers had to protect the children behind them. It was their reason for fighting.

The mutant werewolf waved his huge paws. The orcs looked like children in front of his huge size.

Blade-like claws! The orcs at the front would be swept away at once. The orcs in range closed their eyes.

It was at that moment. The werewolf suddenly bounced back.

“Yipp...?”

The mutant werewolf got tangled up with the other wolves as he rolled across the ground.

“Yip...?”

It was a blank face that didn’t know what was going on. The werewolf tried to get up, but staggered and fell back down.

“Yipp... yip...”

The orc farmers’ eyes widened. Between them and the group of wolves, a single orc was standing.

“Ohhh...!”

The farmers’ faces brightened as they confirmed the appearance of the orc. A burly and muscular body. Tattoos covering his face and torso, with a huge greatsword hanging from his back. An imposing atmosphere that caused the wolves to shrink back!

It was the appearance of a brave orc warrior.

“A warrior...!”

“Ohhh!”

“A warrior!”

The orc warrior looked between the farmers to the body of the young orc on the ground. Then he raised his greatsword.

“I smelled dogs and came running.”

He walked towards the mutant werewolf who still hadn’t understood the situation.

“The dog bastard is back.”

“You... you bastard...!”

“I’m glad to see you before I leave.”

“Yiiiiik...!”

The mutant werewolf rushed towards the orc warrior.

The orc warrior moved and cut downwards on the werewolf’s body.

The werewolf screamed from the blow, his blood spilling onto the earth.

“Kuheok...! Attack! Attack!”

The direwolves simultaneously charged at the orc warrior. Dozens of wolves were jumping at one orc, so it seemed dangerous. The orc farmers grabbed their farm equipment and prepared to help him.

The orc warrior swung his greatsword. The direwolves in the front fell down, bleeding profusely. However, there were still dozens of wolves. The wolves surrounded him in an instant. The warrior’s appearance was hidden from view.

“T-That...!”

It was a sight that made the farmers’ hands sweat! At that moment, a light sparkled

from among the wolves.

*Seokeok!*

*Seokeok!*

*Seokeok!*

Blood splattered from the wolves in turn as the wolves collapsed. The last wolf was pierced by the orc warrior's sword.

“Yippp!”

The orc warrior's greatsword thrust into the belly of a direwolf.

“Yipp...!”

The orc warrior pushed off the body of the dead wolf and pulled out his greatsword. The direwolves were terrified and didn't dare resist. The mutant werewolf that was stumbling behind them yelled frantically, “Attack! I'm telling you to attack!”

But the direwolves had already lost their fighting spirit. The mutant werewolf bared his gums with rage.

“These wimpy guys...”

The orc warrior extended his hand and raised it.

You, come.

It was a gesture of provocation. But the mutant werewolf hovered around and didn't dare to attack.

The orc warrior took one step closer and the werewolf took one step back.

“Grrrrr... Dirty orc...”

“Don't lose your fur, mutant born from nature's mistake.”

The orc warrior nudged the mutant werewolf's sore spot. The eyes of the werewolf

became upset as he rushed out with his claws raised.

*Kakang!*

The greatsword and claws clashed. The blade of the greatsword was scratched.

“I am a mistake? You are nature’s cancer, Orc!”

The orc warrior’s muscles swelled. He was fighting against a werewolf much bigger than him, but he wasn’t pushed back at all. Rather, he overwhelmed the werewolf.

The werewolf suddenly withdrew and slashed out with his claws. He was aiming for the gap where the orc warrior staggered after losing against the force that he was resisting. However, the orc warrior rolled and escaped from the werewolf’s attack range. The werewolf’s claws slashed through empty air.

The orc warrior stabbed his greatsword in that gap of defense. The werewolf stepped back and avoided the attack. The orc warrior’s greatsword slashed at the werewolf’s body several times. The mutant werewolf’s wounds increased.

“Kuck! Kuheok!”

All of the direwolves had already fled. Now the mutant werewolf was alone. The mutant werewolf looked around. The orc farmers were standing with their farm equipment and now he was the one being surrounded. He wanted to run away, but couldn’t because of a deep stab wound on his leg.

“...Grrr. Dirty orc scum...”

The mutant werewolf’s eyes shone.

“Kuaahhhh!”

Using the last of his strength, he turned and ran towards the orc farmers. His massive body made him seem like a bull charging. Sharp teeth flashed from his open mouth.

An urgent situation!

It was at that moment.

*Rattle!*

The frightened orc farmers saw a blade protruding. The mutant werewolf stopped moving. The greatsword had pierced the werewolf's back, the thick blade emerged from his chest. The werewolf's blood flowed down the blade.

The werewolf flopped down.

"Grr... g... gr..."

His head dropped. It was the end of the mutant werewolf, who terrorized the orc farmers. The orc warrior retrieved his greatsword. The body of the mutant werewolf fell down.

"Then, let's live."

The orc warrior bowed his head before placing the big sword back on his back, as if nothing big had happened. He started to head back the way he came. His steps were heading eastward.

The farmers watched with stunned gazes. Then the old orc farmer, Agra called out to the orc warrior.

"Excuse me Warrior."

The orc warrior turned his head.

"Really, we really thank you. Please let us know your name."

He replied.

"Crockta."

"Crockta. A nice name."

The warrior Crockta smiled. He nodded slightly before moving towards the east again. The orc farmers blessed his way.



Thompson handed him the weapon.

The orc warrior, once called Ian, was now called Crockta. The person who was once an apprentice warrior now had a strong atmosphere that felt like Hoyt.

“Here is your sword.”

“This...”

Thompson had been very worried after hearing about Lenox’s death, but he was relieved to know that Hoyt had survived. He said he would go to Orcrox to visit Hoyt as soon as all his work was cleaned up.

“Can you lift it?”

While the new greatsword was much bigger and heavier than the previous one, Crockta had also become stronger. He thought that this was the right weapon for him. The moment he lifted the greatsword in his hand, he felt something snap in place. Just by holding it, he could imagine how this sword moved and how it could cut down the enemy.

“It is really great.”

“It suits you.”

“Thank you.”

[Ogre Slayer (Essence)]

[The greatsword created by the Golden Anvil Clan for their lifesaver, Thompson. It was designed for a strong orc warrior. A very small amount of adamantium is mixed in with an ogre’s flesh and blood.]

It was an Essence grade item. An Essence grade item was a high-end produce that

would be worth millions of won in reality. It looked like an ordinary greatsword, but only those with great eyes would be able to see its value.

Thompson smiled as he saw Crockta's facial expression.

"For my benefactor, this much is nothing."

"Thank you very much. I'll use it well."

"Here is the sheath."

"Yes."

Crockta placed it in the sheath on his back. He felt a great weight on his shoulders when he carried the sword. It felt good.

"I really like it."

"I'm glad you like it."

He looked at the hammer hanging on the wall with a bittersweet expression. "I wish that Hoyt would be happy to receive that."

"He will surely be pleased."

"Hoyt... Will he wake up?"

Hoyt hadn't regained consciousness yet, but it would surely happen. Crockta nodded.

"Yes. He will rise up and become the new instructor at Orcrox."

"That would be nice. I can often go and visit him."

Thompson smiled.

He started his own company, Thompson's Trading Company. It was still early, but on the basis of his relationship with the Golden Anvil Clan, he would be able to rise up quickly to even threaten the position of the Blacksmith Company in Anail.

At that moment, Thompson's secretary poked his head in.

“Boss Thompson.”

“Uh, what is it?”

“A guest has come.”

“Who?”

“It isn’t for Boss... but your guest...” He looked at Crockta. It seemed like the secretary was still unfamiliar with orcs.

“My guest?” Crockta was confused.

“Yes.”

“Who?”

“Guest... ah, excuse me, you can’t come in here...”

The door was swung wide-open. A face that was familiar to Crockta could be seen.

“Hyu. You have become tougher, Orc.”

It was the subordinate who handed Derek’s business card to Crockta.

## CHAPTER 29

# PROPOSAL THAT CAN'T BE REJECTED (2)

---

Derek's residence was very luxurious compared to the other houses in Anail. The flowers and the trees in the garden were placed with great harmony. Fish freely swam in the pond. It had been created with a human's touch, but it looked natural and beautiful.

In the center of all this scenery was Derek, who was sitting at a table, sipping tea. Crockta thought that it was a bizarre sight. The images of the leader of the underworld and a noble enjoying tea time just didn't seem to fit together.

Derek smiled, as if he knew what Crockta was thinking.

"Young Man, what is your taste?"

"Taste?"

"Yes, taste. Your own sense of beauty. Sit."

Crockta sat down across from Derek.

Derek said, "I am sure about my taste. For example, I think there shouldn't be anything else over there. It should just be all yellow tulips."

Derek pointed towards where yellow tulips were planted among grass.

"There should be 13 fish in the pond. No more and no less."

"....."

"I am thorough in these types of things. These tastes combine together to make Derek. And one of those tastes is that the agreed upon contract must be kept. I won't forgive anyone who breaks it. Thanks to that, I was able to gain wealth and power."

"What do you want to say?"

“My taste has fallen.”

Derek laughed. Crockta couldn’t understand what he was talking about.

“There are problems that I can’t solve. I can’t change the sky, just because I don’t like the sun.”

“Then use a parasol.”

“That’s right. I can’t help using a parasol, so it must be part of my tastes. As I said earlier, I am very thorough about my tastes.”

Derek extended a piece of paper towards Crockta. “Let me understand this.”

“.....”

It was a contract. Crockta looked through the information.

“.....”

“You don’t have to make that expression.”

Crockta asked, “What is this?”

“I am interested in getting a dog.”

It meant that Derek had followed and investigated Crockta. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have been able to prepare the contents of this agreement in advance. Crockta’s lips twitched.

It was a contract to provide Crockta information on the Thawing Balhae, and those who were cursed by the stars. In exchange for Derek providing information on the Thawing Balhae Clan, Crockta would have to kill some of the people involved with Thawing Balhae.

The targets weren’t those who were cursed by the stars, but the NPCs.

“Don’t you want revenge?” Derek asked.

“.....”

"I have decided to walk with you. I have planned a few investments on the premise that you are successful in your revenge. You don't have to worry about it, since your targets are people that you would've killed for your revenge anyway."

Crockta read more of the details.

The Thawing Balhae Clan was working with NPCs in several cities. These NPCs were rich and powerful in their respective regions. Derek was going to invest money into those who stood against that power. If the NPCs were destroyed by Crockta, Derek would share his profits with the new power that would emerge as a result.

It was a gamble that relied on Crockta's success.

"Why are you doing this?" Crockta asked Derek.

Crockta was trying to get Derek's help anyway. The scale might be bigger, but it was still what Crockta wanted.

"Would you be angry if I said I was bored?" Derek smiled as he sipped his tea. "Young Man. I am old and my life is complete. I don't want anything right now. Everything is done to my liking, so there isn't anything interesting left."

"That is understandable."

Ian, who had become Crockta, might be playing Elder Lord for a similar reason.

"You are a little bit interesting." Derek smiled.

"....."

"So I want to watch you. It is a desire to get involved in your journey. If your success becomes my success, then I will be more immersed in your story."

Crockta nodded.

There were people like that in reality. They said something similar and bought a sports car. Some spent money while others expressed themselves on the keyboard. It was the same thing so he didn't mind.

"I understand."

"Good."

Crockta asked for a pen in order to sign the contract.

"Ah, before that." Derek shook his head. "I have to see your skills."

"What?"

"Investing in you requires trust, so I want to verify that you have the minimum qualifications. You look stronger than before."

Crockta looked at Derek. He was unchanged. He had wide shoulders and a disciplined build. The atmosphere around him was like a sharp blade. It wouldn't be easy for Crockta to fight Derek. Crockta had a strong chance of losing against Derek.

Derek laughed at Crockta's gaze.

"Not me. My stomach is full, so I have no desire to swing a sword."

"Then...?"

"Here." Derek held out a piece of paper. "If you do this, then I will trust you and sign the contract."

Crockta's eyes widened. He read the piece of paper and nodded.



The free city of Anail began with the fugitives of each species. Therefore, Anail's back streets had strict laws of their own.

One of these laws was, 'don't kill innocent people.'

In the underworld of Anail, unexplained fights occasionally occurred, but they couldn't kill. Even Derek, who ruled the underworld of Anail, didn't bloody his hands unless it was for a contract. It was a common law dating back to the beginning of Anail. This was a city founded by fugitives who ran away from death, so they knew that death couldn't be reversed.

But it was broken.

"Hah, hah. What did I tell you?"

A woman panted roughly. The two men nodded.

Underneath them was a man with a broken head. The woman stabbed his back with her short swords to verify that he was dead. The already dead man showed no response. Blood gushed out onto the ground.

"NPCs are no different."

"We can also level up a lot."

"Let's do a little bit more."

Three people.

They were the user hunters who attacked Crockta before he became a warrior and were slain. They became notorious due to Youvidser Laney, and couldn't hunt users like they used to. Therefore, they started attacking NPCs instead of users.

It wasn't easy, but they had high abilities as user hunters. They moved around Anail in the darkness and attacked. The murders meant that they became the target of Anail's underworld. And the ruler of Anail's underworld was the cold-blooded Derek.

Derek had already sent an assassin. The hitman from Derek found them. It was the orc Crockta.

"....."

Crockta hid his body and confirmed their faces. He had read about them on Derek's piece of paper. Ian couldn't help smiling. Those guys still hadn't fixed their habit.

He could understand why Derek gave this to him as a test. There was an unknown relationship between those who were cursed by the stars. Would he be willing to do it, regardless of the bond between users that NPCs couldn't understand?

Crockta walked up to them. The users turned their heads at the sound of the footsteps. Their faces turned pale.

A single orc appeared from the darkness.

His face was familiar. He had tattoos, and his body was bigger, but both his bloodthirsty eyes and black bandana were unforgettable. They recoiled as they saw the handle of the greatsword poking out above the shoulders.

“That bastard, isn’t he that bastard?”

“It seems like it.”

They realized that there was no retreating. They had chosen a dead end to attack the NPCs. The choice of location to strike at the NPC had become a poison for them. The trio thought despairingly,

“We can’t run away.”

“Are we going to die again? Do we have to suffer like this?”

“There is no way.”

They looked at each other’s faces and sighed.

“Let’s fight.”

“Yes, that was when we weren’t vigilant.”

“We have to fight while protecting Brown.”

Jackson, Brown, and Eri. The trio of user hunters took their positions again. Jackson was the spearman who would keep the enemy in check, and Eri would distract with her movements. The magician Brown would bombard from behind. This was their winning tactic, their bread and butter.

Crockta pulled out his greatsword. In the darkness, a slim light flowed from the sword. The users realized that it wasn’t a regular sword. Greed filled the eyes of the user hunters.

“If we win... that will be ours.”

“There will be an equal distribution.”

Brown chanted a spell. Unlike last time, he was firmly behind Jackson and Eri. They

intended to leave the role of main attacker to Brown.

Crockta moved forward. Jackson's spear moved.

*Kang!*

The spear and sword hit each other. Crockta deflected the spear to the side and rushed forward. At the same time, magic arrows flew in front while Eri's swords struck from the side. Crockta ignored the magic arrows and swung the greatsword at Jackson, who stepped back to dodge.

The magic arrows hit Crockta's body.

"Ugh."

Crockta stopped due to the shock. There was damage. Then Eri's short sword cut his side. Crockta had to back off without doing any damage. The opponents weren't easy to deal with.

"Look, if we do it slowly, then we can win."

The momentum of the user hunters increased.

Crockta nodded, like he had a plan to deal with the users. He took a charging posture. The user hunters were nervous. Crockta rushed in. It was a devastating assault. Jackson moved his spear in front and prepared for the impact. Brown's chant in the rear came to an end.

It was at that moment. Crockta moved his body to the side. It ended up with Jackson being between Crockta and the magician. The magician tried to move his aim towards Crockta, but it didn't work. Crockta used Jackson's body as a shield.

"I can't see him right now..." Brown cried out.

"What?"

Jackson stabbed his spear. Crockta avoided it and grabbed the spear with one hand. Eri tried to stop him, but she backed away as Crockta swung his greatsword. She fell down to the ground from the impact.

Brown, who was in a hurry, moved to the side and fired magic towards Crockta.

At that moment, Crockta pulled the spear with tremendous strength, positioning Jackson's body so that it would make him into a meat shield. Brown's magic hit Jackson's back. Brown's mouth fell open.

"Cough!"

"S-Sorry!"

At the same time, Crockta's greatsword slammed against Jackson's arm. Jackson's arm flew away.

"Kuaaah!"

Crockta threw Jackson away and punched the defenseless Brown. The magician was stunned.

Eri, who was left alone, stepped back and pointed her sword. However, it was her alone against an orc. Crockta approached and looked down at her. The shadow of the burly orc covered her. Within a minute, Crockta's fist had stunned her.

The fight was over. Crockta didn't kill anyone. He captured them with the ropes and gags that Derek's men had given him. Jackson was the only one to notice his intentions, but he fell unconscious after a punch.

Crockta dragged them along like they were luggage. Derek's men were waiting for Crockta outside the alley.

"You truly have great skills."

"What are you going to do with them now?"

"They will be locked up."

Derek's subordinate laughed. His name was Jeremy and he was the strongest among Derek's subordinates, excluding Derek himself.

"These people who received the curse of the stars are annoying. They can revive after dying and can even suddenly disappear. We will use this concrete method on them so

that all they can do is breathe.”

It was a well-known method to take care of users in Elder Lord.

The so called ‘concrete’ method. The original meaning of it was lost, but the users would know that they were completely defeated.

The users couldn’t die. After a few hours, they would revive in a safe place nearby. Therefore, the users were tied up and gagged to prevent death. Even after disconnecting and reconnecting, they would remain tied up. It was the worst method of not being able to play the game.

Due to this, ‘Fixers’ existed in the world of Elder Lord. They were the ones who were paid money to rescue the users, and get rid of the people capturing them. However, this time, their opponent was Derek. These user hunters wouldn’t be able to play Elder Lord anymore unless they reset.

“Very thorough.”

Crockta nodded.

For Lenox’s revenge, he would use the ‘concrete’ method. He would make the Thawing Balhae Clan quit the game as a group.

# **CHAPTER 30**

## **PLAINS RESCUE (1)**

---

Crockta headed to the southeast. His destination was Arnin, the city of elves that was to the southeast of Anail.

His journey would now begin in earnest.

Users were rare in not just Orcrox, but Anail as well. However, Arnin was different. Apart from humans, many users also chose to become elves, and Arnin was a beautiful city of elves. There would be numerous users, and among those users, there would be Thawing Balhae Clan members.

However, there was a problem from the start.

Crockta gathered his hands together and begged, “Excuse me, Elf Guard. How about just a little...”

“The rules are the rules. Please understand.”

A beautiful elf with blonde hair and a slender figure shook her head. She looked like a supermodel, but she was actually one of Arnin’s guards.

That’s right. Crockta was refused entry.

“Nobody is allowed to enter Arnin except for the elves and the humans.”

“That is discrimination!”

“Then pray to be reborn as an elf instead of an orc. Tsk.”

The elf turned away while sweeping her hair back. She was a dazzling beauty that would appear in photographs, but the angry Crockta just wanted to squeeze her. Crockta couldn’t suppress his anger and spoke in rough language to the elf guard,

“Hey, elf with no manners.”

“W-What?”

“Is it because you are pretty? Just because you have the face of a goddess?”

The elf’s face turned bright red at Crockta’s words.

“Your eyes are finally working properly.”

[The appreciation of the elf Elwina has risen. The orc warrior Crockta’s reputation in Arnin has risen.]

Crockta couldn’t believe his eyes. Another message window popped up.

[Most cities have requirements to enter.]

[Build up your reputation to overcome this barrier!]

[There are a variety of ways to raise your reputation. Do good things to help the elves of Arnin!]

“.....”

Crockta opened his mouth but he had no words. He had to build up his reputation to enter the city. What was this?

[Elwina’s appreciation has risen. Your reputation in Arnin has risen.]

“No matter how pretty I am, don’t open your mouth. It is nasty.”

“.....”

Crockta chose not to respond. He spat out the words angrily, but it made his reputation rise. Instead, he was able to realize something. This elf was like a princess who liked praise. In order to enter Arnin, he needed to raise his reputation with the elves, and this elf liked praise. In other words, if he praised this elf, then his reputation would rise and he could enter Arnin.

Crockta forcibly opened his mouth.

“I really admire Elwina’s beauty.”

“Oh my god.”

“Beautiful, gorgeous, elegant, do you know what those words have in common?”

“What?”

“They exist because of you.”

“Well, if you say so. Huhuhu.”

[Elwina’s appreciation has risen! Your reputation in Arnin has risen!]

Crockta said, “You have a sweet voice.”

“Hu, huhut. It is a shame that this is emerging from your mouth...”

“It would be even more embarrassing to keep my mouth shut in front of such a beauty.”

“P-Please stop. I’m getting embarrassed.”

“Beautiful.”

“Stop...”

Elwina became lost in front of the onslaught of attacks. Her appreciation gradually increased, but she couldn't bear it any longer as she tightly closed her eyes and cast a spell.

“Your eyes...”

“A-Ah! Silence!”

“Heeok?”

Crockta was still weak to magic spells. He could endure a physical hit, but he was still defenseless to magic. So he was hit with her Silence magic.

“...Ueeh.”

He wanted to speak but only a strange groan emerged.

“I know that your eyes work properly. I am shy so don’t tell me any more.”

“Uhh.”

“The Silence magic will be released over time.”

“.....”

He sold his conscience for reputation, only to receive silence in return for the praise. Was God punishing him?

Crockta turned around. He would honestly build his reputation. Somewhere, there would be something he could do to build up reputation. Suddenly, the elf guard Elwina spoke from behind him.

“Hey, Orc Warrior.”

“.....?”

“If you go to the plains north of Arnin, then there might be work that will build up your reputation. No, what is that expression? Don’t mistake this for a desire to help you.”

“.....”

Crockta, who was already tired, had no energy to answer. He didn't look back and just raised his thumb over his head. It meant 'I know.' Elwina nodded as she looked at that dignified rear view.

"He is a moderately cool orc."

An orc with the ability to recognize outstanding beauty and speak the truth! Furthermore, he was able to give a nice gesture like raising his thumb. Elwina felt some appreciation towards the orc. Wouldn't it be really cool if that orc really did enter Arnin?

Crockta, who had no idea what Elwina was thinking, just trudged along. He thought about all the good things he could do to raise his reputation. The best thing to do was to help elves in distress. He listened to Elwina's words and headed to the plains north of Arnin.

Just like the elf city, the forest on the outskirts was filled with beautiful flowers and bushes. As he headed north along Arnin's walls, he eventually saw the wide plains.

"Ohh..."

Spacious plains! It was a spectacular sight, lifting the cold feeling in his heart. Crockta spread open his arms as he soaked in the sight of the plains. By the way, there were things constantly moving on the wide plains.

".....!"

Ian realized what they were. This wasn't originally a plain. It was just that the trees and tall plants had been cut down and flattened. The main culprits of this situation were still moving and expanding the plains. They were huge monsters resembling rhinoceros.

[Get rid of the triters, enormous gourmands that enjoy eating plants and trees. They are the monsters that the elves are most wary of. Whenever they appear, the forest will become dry and bare. The land that they occupy will eventually become a desert.]

[If you hunt them, the elves might think differently about you.]

He had painted an image of rescuing a beautiful elf and entering the city. The reality was that hard grinding was required to raise his reputation.

Crockta sighed as he entered the plains.

A triter discovered Crockta and made a loud sound. Its cry was similar to that of a rhinoceros, but it had a lot of teeth to chew on the trees and plants. There was a huge number of them. If there were that many of them, they truly would eat until the forest was gone.

“Truuu...”

The triter’s cry sounded like a roar. No questions asked! Crockta approached the triters, who were wary of the strange invader. Indeed, they weren’t gentle monsters. Their eyes changed and their hind legs got into a position to pounce.

Crockta faced one of them. The triter kicked against the ground and jumped. A strong shock wave hit Crockta, causing him to fall down. It was the first time that he had been defeated in a contest of pure strength since he had become an orc. Crockta got up.

“Truuuuuuu...”

“.....!”

Crockta glared at it. The eyes of the triter slid over him. One side of its mouth went up. Then it looked at Crockta and shook its head.

An obvious provocation! Crockta angrily pulled out his greatsword. The sword flashed and the expression of the triter suddenly hardened.

“.....!”

The triter looked into Crockta’s eyes and started to turn its body away.

Crockta chased after it and blocked its path. The triter made an oblivious sound, like it was confused. Its eyes were innocent. Crockta couldn’t believe that it had laughed at him just a moment ago. Great acting skills!

Crockta blinked in shock.

This guy...? Were all the triters the same?

Crockta placed his greatsword back in his sheath.

Then other triters started to gather around the first triter. They discovered the orc and came to ask what was going on. Once four or five triters joined, it felt like Crockta was being trapped within a huge wall.

The first triter turned his head back towards Crockta again. Its lips twitched and its tongue moved from side to side. It was as if the triter was thoroughly insulting him! What a rapidly changing attitude happening after its friends gathered!

Crockta's hands shook.

The triters looked towards him and cried out. They started calling towards Crockta like they were joining in on the provocation.

“Truuu...”

“Truuuuuuuon...”

Crockta stood in the middle and listened to their insults miserably. He raised his head with determined eyes. As he was unable to speak, he muttered something on the inside.

To enter Arnin, he had to become a friend of the elves.

Crockta's eyes blazed passionately.

An enemy of his enemy was his friend! He pulled out his greatsword. The triters jumped at the sight of the weapon, but they believed in the absolute dominance of their numbers.

Arnin, the city where it was difficult to meet orcs. For the first time in a long time, the residents of Arnin heard the battle cry of the orcs echo through the plains.

“Uahhh (Bul’tar)———!”

Crockta's greatsword tore through the air towards the triters.



An elf user, Yurin, chose the archer class and became confident as her character grew.

She couldn't be satisfied with just the archer class anymore. She was aiming for the higher level elemental archer that was only available in Arnin. However, she wasn't qualified enough, and had to complete various quests to raise her skills and level.

This quest required hunting the triters that damaged the forest.

"Chahat!"

She drew back her bowstring. The thin line shook, like it was going to break. Within a short time, she created an arrow with her magic power. The arrow flew and pierced the body of a triter.

"Truuu..."

However, the leather was so thick that it didn't die. She pulled back the bowstring again. The bleeding triter glared at Yurin. It snorted angrily and charged towards her. Yurin's heart started running wild. She had to shoot again before it arrived. However, her mind was shaken. The eyes of the triter were so wild.

Her hands became tangled and she dropped the arrow.

"Ehhh...?"

The triter kicked against the ground. She hurriedly escaped, but the triter was much faster. It would mean death if she was hit by the triter.

"No!"

She avoided a frontal collision, but her body was thrown in the air. Blood oozed from a wound on her skin. She didn't pay attention to the injury and escaped again.

She had suffered for a long time after being killed by a monster in the past. The aftereffect of death was that her skill proficiencies fell. Her assimilation rate dropped rapidly and a sense of lethargy seemed to follow her around.

If she died this time, then she would have to go through it all again. She just wanted to avoid that. She ran through the plains with an elf archer's unique jumping skills, but she couldn't get rid of the triter.

She made one last attempt to shoot an arrow, but the triter was too close to her. She closed her eyes.

“.....”

Nothing happened. She opened her eyes.

“.....!”

Her eyes filled with doubt. Standing in front of her was an orc.

“H-How did you...?”

Orc mobs or NPCs shouldn't be here. In addition, he was an orc warrior covered in tattoos! Orc warriors could barely deal with high level users. Arnin obviously wasn't an orc filled area.

The orc swung his sword without any hesitation and sliced the triter. Blood spilled from the triter as it collapsed on the spot.

“.....”

Her heart was shaken for a moment at the sight of the ferocious, bloodied orc.

The orc looked at her. She couldn't help but gulp nervously. With her skills, she would surely die if she met an orc warrior. The orc started to approach.

“S-S-Spare m...”

The orc extended something.

“.....?”

It was a glass bottle filled with glowing red liquid. It was a potion. It was a low grade potion, but it was still expensive.

“A-Are you giving it to me...?”

The orc nodded without saying anything. What was this? She didn't know what to do so she sprinkled the potion that the orc gave her on her wound. Her wound was restored.

Perhaps he was a user...? The orc had a black bandana over his forehead so she couldn't tell.

“Are you a user?”

“.....”

The orc just nodded.

“Why is an orc user here?”

Despite the recent trend of orc users, most of them were unable to overcome the limits of their species and reset. The orc had given Yurin a potion and even bandaged the areas that weren't healed. An unfamiliar confidence sprang up as the orc kept remaining silent. This was a reliable orc that she could trust.

The orc silently gave her a thumbs up after treating Yurin's wounds.

Thumbs up! Was he an orc that couldn't speak? He expressed his mind using his thumbs.

An unknown bond formed between the orc and the elf, who hunted the triters on these wide plains. Both of them hunted the triters close to each other.

“Be careful!”

They helped each other in times of crisis. This time, the orc was the one in trouble. As he was about to be flattened by a triter, her high speed turned it into a honeycomb. The triter in front of the orc fell down.

The orc stared at her from where he was lying on the ground.

Yurin grinned. The debt had been paid off, Mister Orc. This time she raised her thumb first.

The orc warrior nodded and returned to battle. The exchange of friendship between an orc and an elf!

“...Heh.”

“...Kul.”

The two of them turned their backs to each other like they were embarrassed and snorted.

# **CHAPTER 31**

## **PLAINS RESCUE (2)**

---

Yurin looked at the sky. It was almost dark.

She had lost track of time as she hunted the triters with her bow. It had been a while since she had been so immersed in a hunt. After checking her status window, she saw that she had gained one level, and that one of her skills was upgraded.

The corpses of the triters were all around her. It was a scene made by only two people, Yurin and the orc.

She couldn't see where the orc had gone. She felt regret for some reason.

It was too late to return to Arnin. However, the orc appeared again, walking from the direction of Arnin. He was carrying a bag full of something. The orc placed the bag down on the ground. Then he dug a pit and started making a campfire.

“.....”

A campfire was created on the plains at dusk. After the fire was created, the orc started to pull things out of the bag. Some fighting aids such as potions and bandages emerged, as well as several bottles of alcohol.

He had probably obtained them from the merchants coming to Arnin. The orc, who was preparing something, suddenly raised his big sword. The light of the campfire reflected off the blade of the sword.

He used the greatsword to dismantle the bodies of the triters on the ground. It was rapid work. The big meat was then placed on a tree branch. At the end, he laid it on top of the campfire.

“.....!”

Triter grilled skewers! The orc beckoned, as if he had felt Yurin's eyes. Yurin walked up to the campfire. The orc made another skewer and handed it to here. It was big and heavy in her hands. Yurin took the skewer and sat opposite to the orc.

The orc was silent. He just quietly stared at the campfire. Yurin's heart eased. She felt an unknown sense of comfort from the orc. She didn't have to force herself to maintain a conversation like she did with others. She just enjoyed this serene moment.

Yurin let out a long sigh as she looked up at the sky. There were countless stars in the sky. It was a beautiful night sky that could never be seen in South Korea, where she lived in reality. The stars shining over the plains, the sound of a campfire, and the fragrant smell of meat.

She just enjoyed the comfort of this moment. Her mind became calm.

Suddenly, the orc gave her something.

“.....?”

It was alcohol. Yurin accepted it. The orc picked up another bottle from the ground and took a sip.

“.....!”

She had seen this scene a lot somewhere.

Yes, the Western films. On the screen, the wild and violent western troops would exchange meat and alcohol silently in the wilderness. Yurin felt like she had become a gunman who met a barbarian or a ghastly outlaw in the wilderness. The other person was a bad person, but they fought together and a subtle friendship was formed!

Yurin drank heavily at the thought, the hot liquid flowing down her throat. She wiped her mouth with her sleeve.

The orc nodded and gave her another bottle of alcohol. Yurin and the orc drank from the alcohol bottles.

The triter meat was cooked. The orc and Yurin bit into it. It was a little chewy, but she didn't care. They were now the outlaws of the plains who were chewing on triter meat. Was this why other users fell into role-playing? Yurin felt free. She squeezed the oil out and ate the meat.

The moon shone over the dead bodies of the triters around them.

Meanwhile, Yurin and the orc continued to drink. They became quite tipsy. Yurin and the orc didn't talk in words. Just tapping the bottles against each other was enough. Everything was clear with alcohol.

It was at that moment. There was the sound of footsteps and people talking.

Yurin frowned. Somehow, she felt like they were intruding on this historic time.

"I have to work hard to build up my reputation in Arnin."

"Isn't it night time?"

"Just do it. Perhaps there is a skill that will brighten up the night sky."

Based on the dialogue, they were users.

It felt like they were roles designed to crash this well-formed stage. It was like a loud alarm making a dissonant sound that ruined the music the best orchestra was playing.

She didn't want to talk about hunting with them or what their levels and skills were. Yurin was tired of playing the hard game without being able to look forward. At that moment, she just wanted to stay in the world that she had made with the orc.

Yurin pulled out a cloth cap from her bag. It was to hide the mark on her forehead. The orc looked at her but Yurin just smiled.

They both raised the bottles again. The sound of footsteps was getting closer.

"Eh...? Fire?"

Instead of turning around, she took a swig from the bottle and swallowed the alcohol. Then she chewed on the triter meat.



The dwarf user Gilliam came to Arnin to meet his friend, the human user Puri, only to be denied entry. People from other species said that he should build up his reputation to enter Arnin. Most of them headed to the north of Arnin to hunt the triters.

Despite it being night, Gilliam led Puri towards the plains.

He only saw the tough blacksmiths and warriors in the dwarf villages, so he wanted to see the beautiful city of the elves. Even the cold guard was like a beauty from a photograph. Once he got inside, many beautiful people would be moving around.

With these expectations, he tried to quickly hunt the triters. However, the plains were calm. He couldn't see any signs of the triters that were constantly eating plants every day. There was just the light of a fire from a corner of the plains.

"Eh...? Fire?"

Gilliam and Puri walked towards the fire. Some users or NPCs seemed to be camping. They wanted to ask about the triters.

However, Gilliam and Puri gradually fell silent as they approached the campfire. It was because they quickly realized. The ridges in the darkness that they thought were rocks, actually weren't rocks. It was the corpses of the triters that were scattered around the campfire. Numerous triters were dead. There was also the rotten smell of blood.

Gilliam and Puri looked at each other. Signs of anxiety were clearly evident. All of the corpses of the triters were divided into parts or riddled with holes, so mangled that they couldn't be recognized. It was a disastrous scene. How long had these people been killing to slaughter so many triters?

They guessed that the owners of the campfire were the cause. They wanted to step back, but a strong curiosity prompted them to identify the faintly visible people. They drew closer to the campfire.

".....!"

Gilliam and Puri stopped. The first thing they saw was the menacing face of an orc. An orc warrior with full body and face tattoos! He raised an alcohol bottle with a cavalier expression as a way to greet the visitors.

The second person had their backs to Gilliam and Puri, so they couldn't see them clearly. A female with long hair. She turned her head to look at them. She was a beautiful female elf.

But the atmosphere around her was different from the other elves they knew. Her idle eyes seemed like they could slaughter someone at any minute. The elf drank with a

bottle in one hand and a huge meat skewer in the other, regardless of the visitors. The sight of a beauty wiping the alcohol with her sleeve!

She turned towards the campfire again like she wasn't interested in them. Gilliam and Puri didn't know what to do. The elf opened her mouth.

"Are you going to just stand there?"

It was a delicate yet decadent voice. It was seductive but also filled with an unknown killing intent. The voice also seemed like a warning. A warning for them not to sit down!

If they were given an opportunity to nickname her, they would call her this. Venomous spider! The black widow spider who was seductive but would ultimately lead men to their destruction!

"W-We are just passing by..."

"Sit."

Thanks to her, they sat quietly at the campfire.

Gilliam and Puri sat down and watched. The orc and elf drank from the bottles again without worrying about them. Were these two truly the ones who massacred the triters?

Gilliam couldn't suppress his curiosity and asked.

"Many triters were killed."

"....."

"It stinks of blood here. Are you skilled?"

At the mention of the bloody smell, the orc warrior Crockta sniffed. He didn't smell anything. He breathed deeply like he was holding his breath. He had spent all day on the plains so he couldn't smell the blood anymore. Instead, there was only the smell of cooked triter meat.

The triter meat was from the very first triter who mocked Crockta on the plains. It

dared to laugh at him, but in the end, it became his meal. Crockta smiled as he thought about it.

“.....!”

Gilliam and Puri were astonished.

The devilish orc had taken a deep breath at the mention of the bloody smell and then smiled! He was satisfied with the feast of blood that he had created. He smelled blood and smiled happily! He was a natural killer who was born to shed blood or a natural assassin.

They started to think that sitting here was a mistake.

Puri tried to change the atmosphere by talking to the elf next to him.

“You must have suffered to catch so many of these guys. Isn’t that right? Wasn’t it hard, Elf? Hahaha... ha.”

The elf Yurin stared at Puri with a mocking attitude. She was normally timid and dismissed by other users. When she made a mistake, they tried to teach her.

But behold, she hid that she was a user and they spoke so politely to her. They were acting like they couldn’t be rude to Yurin. Yurin couldn’t help smiling. This was why people looked for something different when role-playing. Such a minor change made such a big difference.

“.....!”

Gilliam and Puri were shocked again.

The elf smiled at the memories, like she was saying that hunting so many triters wasn’t that hard! It was obvious that this elf was in a state of ecstasy as she recalled the scene of slaughter. Was this woman really so happy about slaughtering the triters? This was like the blood madness that was the symbol of psychopaths. If she was a real person, then she would be a serial killer worse than Jack the Ripper!

Gilliam and Puri looked at each other and started to shake.

They met demons while trying to hunt triters. The triters, who already encountered

these demons, were cold corpses. That would also be their fate!

"That, we..."

Gilliam and Puri got up from their seats. But they didn't make it. The orc's heavy hand grabbed Gilliam's wrist. Puri was also held by the elf and prevented from getting up.

Gilliam and Puri watched them with trembling eyes. Instead of talking, they grabbed new bottles and handed them to Gilliam and Puri.

The shadows from the campfire grew. The shadows over the faces of the orc and elf fluttered like evil masks. The long shadows at their backs made them no longer seem like humans.

Gilliam and Puri flopped down with weakened legs.

# **CHAPTER 32**

## **PLAINS RESCUE (3)**

---

Gilliam and Puri began hunting the triters.

Yesterday, they seemed to have become drunk from the alcohol drifting on the wind and had a misunderstanding for a while. The orc and the elf were ordinary people. Gilliam and Pri split the alcohol and the triter meat with them all night.

The elf, whom they thought was a psychopath killer, was just a user on a quest; while the orc, who couldn't speak, was an NPC hunting triters to enter Arnin. An orc building his reputation to enter Arnin was unheard of and also seemed dangerous. But unlike his menacing appearance, the orc was actually kind.

“Ack!”

The triters were formidable monsters, so there were times when dangerous situations were created. Every single time, the orc saved them. The orc warrior covered in tattoos looked exciting and dynamic, even when hunting triters.

“Orc, thank you.”

The orc smiled and raised his thumb. The characteristic of the orc was that he used his thumb very well in lieu of his voice. When it was good, he expressed his emotions with a thumbs up. When he was angry due to the triters, he would announce his revenge with a thumbs down.

Gilliam also raised his thumb.

“I will do a thumbs up as well.”

Once it was daytime, other users and NPCs started to appear on the plains. The job to build reputation in Arnin was well known, so even beginners often tried it out.

“Dwarf, what is that orc?” A gnome user that was hunting triters in the area asked.

Gnomes were similar to dwarves, but they had a low number of users like the orcs.

Their magic power and dexterity were excellent. Since orcs were normally an unplayable species, gnomes were the first to say that they had the fewest number of users.

“He is...”

What should he explain? Gilliam worried about it before replying. “A good orc.”

“Huh? Isn’t a good orc a dead orc?”

“What do you mean? Please be careful what you say.”

“Huh?”

There was a common misperception of orcs. Most people thought that they were rough and ignorant creatures. That they were difficult enemies that yielded great rewards once killed.

Gilliam had thought so as well. But this orc was different. After the sun went up, the orc kept on raising his thumb. The thumb didn’t rest, meaning he helped others without hesitation. It didn’t matter what species they were.

“You will soon come to understand my words.”

“.....?”

Enyanis, the administrator of the Arnin Plains, saw all of this occur.

“Hoh, that orc, he is quite good.”

Enyanis’s task was to control the number of triters and to keep the forest from shrinking. Reputation meant awareness among the elves, and Enyani’s reputation also increased when he reported about the work on the plains.

As the administrator, Enyanis watched every battle on the plains. The triters were tough monsters, so the plains were always at risk. But after the emergence of the orc, casualties fell sharply.

“I need to watch.”

However, the orc Crockta just repeated the work with a blank head while receiving the attention of the surrounding people. It was boring. It took time to kill one triter. In addition, if a user got in trouble, then he would rush over to the triter, regardless of the amount of reputation.

He couldn't ignore the warrior's oath. A warrior protects the powerless!

Crockta saved another user's life. As soon as a triter was about to trample on the gnome, it was head-butted by Crockta.

".....!"

The gnome looked at him with surprised eyes. Crockta wanted to shout, but Elwina's Silence magic still hindered him. That awful woman.

"Huu."

It was annoying not being able to talk. Instead of speaking 100 words, Crockta just raised his thumb.

".....!"

The gnome's eyes changed. The gnome seemed spellbound as he followed in raising his thumb.

Crockta nodded. The people of the plains seemed to strangely follow his thumb gesture. Crockta was going back to fighting the triters when an elf caught his attention. It was Yurin, whom he hunted with yesterday and drank alcohol with all night. For some reason, he felt shy and turned his body.

By the way, the outskirts of the plains suddenly became loud.

".....?"

Crockta took a breath after finishing off a triter and looked over. A group of humans was entering the plains. All of them were beginners except for the leader, who was wearing expensive metal armor. It was the equipment of a high level user.

It seemed like he was helping out his friends with their reputation work. However, he had a pompous expression on his face.

"Hey, there are a lot of people. You don't know how I struggled to raise my reputation. Now everything is written on the website. This is much better, it is great. Wait comfortably."

Then he showed off the power of his sword as he cast a skill. An active skill. A sharp force flew from the sword towards a triter. The triter collapsed as blood was spilled. Finally, the man approached and finished it off.

"Brother, nice."

"The best."

The party praised the man. The man's shoulder raised. He looked around the plains like it was nothing. However, he then notice an orc. He doubted his eyes.

"...An orc?"

He looked again and saw the orc. His eyes changed. The plains were filled with triters and one orc. It was easy if there wasn't a group. He didn't know how the orc appeared here, but the orc was his target.

It was a target that could make him stand out more than the triter. The man glanced over at a pretty female user in the party.

"Wait and watch. I will catch it quickly."

He immediately approached the orc. Crockta felt his presence, but didn't pay attention since he was a human. He was walking to find another triter. Suddenly, there were a cool sensation on his back. It felt like all the hairs on his body rose.

Crockta instinctively leaned down. The blade passed through the air.

Crockta turned around. A high level user with a sword was approaching Crockta. Crockta wanted to shout and ask what he was doing, but Elwina's silence still tormented him. He felt like he would die of frustration.

Crockta stretched out both hands and protested with gestures.

"What are you doing over there?" The other users asked instead of Crockta.

The man shrugged. "Hunting an orc."

"That orc is working to build his reputation, so leave him alone. He is a good orc."

"A good orc?"

The man burst out laughing. "Don't say something so strange. I will take care of it. Do I need your permission to grab a mob?"

"That orc isn't a mob..."

"Whatever. If you step in, then you will get hurt."

Then the man attacked Crockta again.

"Eh? What is that?"

"That, that!"

"Uhuh...!"

The users on the plains groaned at the scene.

"Uwah (Bul'tar)!"

Crockta raised his greatsword and responded. This man was different from the other users. His attitude was arrogant, but he definitely had good fighting skills. Fast and strong. His level was high. Crockta blocked the sword and stepped back.

The man laughed and successively attacked Crockta. It was an opponent who was impervious to an orc's strength. Every single attack was heavy.

"This is the end of the orc."

The man pushed strongly at Crockta. Crockta was pushed back.

"You only have strength. You can't do anything if you meet a stronger person!"

He leapt at Crockta. Crockta hurriedly blocked it with the greatsword, but there was a strong shock. He had completely lost the initiative.

The man's offensive continued. Every time Crockta defended against an attack, he was pushed back. There was another strike as soon as he restored his posture, forcing Crockta on the defensive. Crockta had to change the rhythm but he couldn't see any gaps.

While retreating, his foot was caught on the corpse of a triter. Crockta's legs got tangled up for a moment. The man didn't miss this chance and rushed forward. He used an active skill. There was a smile on the man's face as he aimed his attack towards the fallen Crockta.

Then an arrow flew through the air.

*Kwang!*

The arrow containing magic power hit the man's plate armour and exploded, causing the man to bounce back. He rolled on the ground and then stood up.

He shouted angrily."What is this?"

"What are you doing?" The elf Yurin asked."Why did you attack him?"

"I am just catching a mob so why is everyone interfering?"

"He isn't a mob."

"If he isn't a mob, then what is he?"

"What is an NPC? Are all NPCs mobs?"

"An orc is a mob. Aish, all of the people here are crazy."

"Ha. Is that all you have to say? This uncle, I will stop you."

"I should be the one saying that, old lady"

"Really?"

The two people had a stand-off.

"In any case, if I continue to attack, then you won't be able to handle it."

Yurin aimed her arrow. The man laughed. The elf wasn't high-level so she wasn't much of an opponent. It would be hard if she fought together with the orc, but he was confident in his eventual victory.

At that moment, Crockta stepped forward.

He held out a hand towards Yurin. Yurin was able to understand his expression after fighting with him, drinking alcohol all night and communicating together. He was telling her to stay in the background.

Crockta's gaze turned towards the man with an intense gaze. He lifted his greatsword while staring at the man.

Let's do this until the end.

Then Crockta placed the greatsword on his shoulder and raised his hand towards the man.

Come.

No one could fail to understand the meaning. The man grinned and lifted his sword.

"Arrogant orc."

Crockta took a more careful posture. The man was the arrogant one. Crockta's whole body entered the combat posture. He didn't miss any of the opponent's slight movements. Power boiled up inside him.

[Indomitable Fighting Spirit (Rare) has been used.]

[Tattoos of Honor (Rare) has been used.]

The greatsword, Ogre Slayer, seemed to cry out. The grip felt right in his hands. Even the wind blowing past his nose felt right. The opponent was stronger but that was fine. This much power was enough to defeat the enemy.

The tactics of the orc Crockta was to trample the enemy with strong force, but Raven's speciality was destroying stronger enemies with less power.

"If you wish to die, then I will kill you!"

The man rushed in. His party was rooting for the man.

"Brother! Fighting!"

"Brother, you can win!"

The man cast an active skill as a reply. It flew from his sword. Crockta rolled against the ground and avoided it.

*Rattle!*

The large rock behind Crockta exploded. It was a technique powerful enough to leave a scar on the hard rock. However, there was a cooldown on active skills. It would be fine for Crockta not to worry about it temporarily.

"Cool!"

The man smiled as he heard the female user's voice. The man wasn't completely immersed in the fight. He needed to always keep an eye on the opponent.

Crockta confronted the man. He saw the moment that the man looked away.

Crockta instantly kicked the ground. Dust rose and covered the man's vision. He quickly moved back.

"Cough, spit!"

The greatsword flew through the dust. The man hurriedly blocked it. His head had almost been cut off.

The man's posture was unstable and Crockta used that gap to kick him in the abdomen. The man didn't receive much damage due to his armor, but his body was pushed away. He wiped the grit off his face.

"Fuc..."

As the man cursed and rushed forward, Crockta threw the dirt again.

“You asshole!”

The man shook his head and retreated. He looked everywhere. He was cautious because of the previous actions. But the enemy had already disappeared into the dust storm.

The weakness was completely grasped.

Crockta ran forward. The man discovered the approaching opponent and moved his body accordingly, barely avoiding the attack. Crockta turned and faced the man again. Crockta kicked at the ground with his feet.

The man couldn't help flinching back. Crockta didn't miss that moment and swung his greatsword. The man's reaction was a beat too late. The man tried to block it but Crockta's greatsword struck the outside of the man's arm.

The armor crumpled and the blade became stuck in the man's arm.

“Cough!”

The man stabbed out with the sword in his other hand, but Crockta had already withdrawn. Crockta couldn't give time for the enemy to recover. He kicked the ground. Dust scattered once again towards the man who was wounded. The man spat out in disgust.

“Fuck, you fucking bastard!”

He hurriedly stepped back. Crockta pursued him. The man desperately tried to open his eyes, but dirt was flowing down his eyelids. Grit stabbed at his corneas. The man reflexively blinked. Tears appeared in his eyes.

As his vision blurred, the orc's greatsword could be seen. He raised his sword but his wounded right arm was slow. Crockta's greatsword stabbed through the armour into the man's stomach.

The man kneeled down.

“Kuheooth...!”

Blood poured out. It was a situation where he couldn't fight anymore. The victor was decided. All those watching the fight exclaimed from the shock.

Crockta raised his greatsword. It was on the verge of falling towards the man's neck.

"S-Stop..."

The man shook as he looked up at Crockta.

"Don't kill..."

He raised both hands and threw away his sword. The equipment he was wearing, including the armor, were extremely expensive. The aftereffects of death could be recovered after some time, but the equipment he went into debt to purchase couldn't.

He couldn't let this orc or the other users on the plains have them.

He was no longer concerned with the party watching behind him. The man still hadn't repaid all the interest yet. Through these items, he was going to become stronger and become a user who turned Elder Lord into a business.

It would be an enormous loss if he lost the Essence rated armour that he had purchased with much difficulty. If he lost the rest of the equipment, including the sword, he would fall into hell.

"Please..."

The man begged. Crockta looked at him quietly.

Then someone said, "Kill him."

It was Yurin.

Within a short period of time, the users quietly watching the scene started to call out.

"Orc, kill him!"

"Don't let that guy survive!"

"Kill!"

They were all users who had been helped by Crockta. The voices soon increased. They were like the audience in the Colosseum clamoring for the loser's death. Crockta looked at them and then he looked down at the man begging for mercy.

Fear and horror were displayed in the man's eyes.

"....."

Crockta lowered his greatsword.

The watching Yurin said, "He tried to kill you first. You heard what he said, if this guy had won, then he absolutely would've never spared you. Make him pay the price!"

All the spectators, including the users, nodded at Yurin's words.

"He is a user, a person who is cursed by the stars. He will rise again!"

"He will just receive a penalty if he is killed!"

"He has to learn that if he strikes first, he might die."

"Kill him!"

However, Crockta shook his head. It was to indicate that he wouldn't kill the man.

"Why?"

Yurin asked like it was ridiculous. The orc warrior she encountered was kind but not weak-minded. She couldn't understand it.

"....."

Crockta wanted to speak. However, Elwina's Silence magic was still blocking his mouth.

So he turned around instead of talking. As Crockta walked, the crowd split to the left and right. He was heading towards a giant rock. It was the rock that the man's active skill had hit.

Crockta raised his greatsword and gathered all his strength. After Greatsword

Technique was upgraded to Leyteno's Greatsword Technique, he was able to leave a mark with it. Crockta placed the sword on the rock and started carving something with the blade.

The spectators held their breaths and watched. The shape of letters slowly appeared before the audience's eyes.

[Warrior.]

Everybody was confused, but their mouths dropped open as the contents were gradually revealed.

[The fighter has already discarded his weapon.]

Crockta finished with the sentence.

[A warrior doesn't attack unarmed people.]

He placed his greatsword in the sheath. As Crockta turned around, the people on the plains stared at the rock in a daze.

A warrior doesn't attack unarmed people!

“.....!”

None of them could open their mouths. If the enemy doesn't resist, then don't kill. They thought that the orcs were savages and that the humans were civilized. However, it was a human who attacked the innocent orc first and the humans who shouted to kill the man. Unknown emotions stirred inside them.

Who was this orc? Was this an orc warrior?

The orc looked huge as he stood silently in front of the rock.

*Clap. Clap. Clap.*

Someone walked out while clapping. It was the administrator of the Arnin Plains, Enyanis. He stood in front of Crockta and applauded, his eyes wet with tears.

“You... are a true warrior. The talent that Arnin needed for a long time is an orc! I would

like to invite you to our city."

Had Crockta's reputation work finally finished? The audience cheered. Crockta silently nodded.

"But it will be hard for everyone here if you suddenly disappeared, so I would like to give you a mission."

Crockta was confused. What mission?

"I will appoint you as the leader of the Arnin Plain's Rescue Unit. There is no more need to catch the triters. For the next three days, please save others as you have previously been doing. Only then will you be allowed to enter Arnin."

Enyanis' proposal of an Arnin Plain's Rescue Unit!

Crockta nodded without any worries. Those watching from behind cheered. Crockta and Enyanis shook hands as applause rang out.

Arnin Plain's Rescue Unit, a tradition of Arnin that would remain for many years to come! It was begun by an unknown orc warrior, not a human, nor an elf.

# CHAPTER 33

## PLAINS RESCUE (4)

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A university restaurant.

Everybody was eating their meals. The TV stopped at one channel.

*-Hello. I am Giuseppe, a reporter from [Surprise! What happened in Elder Lord?]. I am now in the elven city, Arnin. There is a strange thing occurring here!*

Behind her were the high walls of Arnin. The camera illuminated Arnin's landscape before focusing on Giuseppe again.

*-Arnin is famous for its beautiful elf mayor, but there is something more mysterious than her beauty occurring here. It isn't here in Arnin, but in the Northern Arnin Plains, the place where triters are hunted to build up reputation.*

She ran northwards towards the plains. The angle shook like the cameraman was chasing after her.

*-What is going on here? This Giuseppe will go and check it out!*

She discovered users walking out of the plains. Their faces were covered in mosaics.

*-Hello. Did you just come from the Arnin Plains?*

*-So what?*

*-People are saying that a miracle is happening at Arnin Plains, is that true?*

*-Ahh...*

A dwarf male nodded.

*-That's right. It is a very curious thing. I was pleasantly surprised.*

*-What is it?*

*-You will know if you go there. If you go now, then you will be able to meet him.*

Subtitles appeared and there was a narrator.

*-Who can she meet?*

This time, Giuseppe asked the elf standing beside the dwarf. His face was also covered in a mosaic.

*-Have you met him personally?*

*-Of course. We drank and ate together all night.*

*-Drank?*

*-That's right. At first there was a misunderstanding, but he is a very kind and nice person. My eyes were opened.*

*-Wow, is he really that great?*

*-He is truly... a true ○○.*

The last part referring to the character was beeped out. The camera cut to another scene. Giuseppe stood at the entrance of the plains as she stared into the screen.

*-Now, shall I go and see the rumored person?*

Then Giuseppe entered the plains. The spacious plains were filled with people struggling against the huge triters. Giuseppe lowered her voice and said,

*-Now... let's find out who the rumoured figure is.*

Then she ran. She ran across the plains and found a user who had just killed a triter. Giuseppe moved cautiously.

*-Here... Hello?*

*-Eh, what? Ah, Giuseppe! Aren't you Giuseppe?*

*-Haha, do you recognize me?*

*-I'm a fan. A big fan of 'What happened in Elder Lord?'*

*-Thank you.*

*-But what are you doing... Ah! You came because of him.*

The user nodded.

*-Ah! Do you know who he is?*

*-Yes. I know very well. I thanked him for his help a few times.*

*-Thanked him for his help?*

*-Anyone who doesn't know him here is a spy, a spy. One spy was frightened off by him.  
Hahaha.*

Giuseppe looked at the screen with a coy look.

*-Then... what type of person is he? I'm really curious.*

She asked the user again.

*-Where can I meet him?*

*-Hrmm... He... because he is so busy...*

The user stroked his chin and pointed in one direction.

*-Do you see that rock over there?*

*-That big rock?*

*-Yes. Wait over there. It is the place where his legend began.*

*-Legend?*

Giuseppe trembled and made a big fuss.

*-Legend! Truly? What legend? And he might be waiting for us! My heart's already*

*pounding! I'm looking forward to it. Would the viewers like to come along as well?*

Then she bowed to the user and ran towards the rock. It was an automatic shot that didn't require a heavy camera, but the screen waved once again like someone was chasing after her.

They arrived in front of the rock. It was a big rock. But as they approached it, they saw something engraved in the rock. Subtitles popped up.

[Do you want to know what is written on here...?]

Giuseppe breathed out and placed her hands on the rock and took a step back in amazement.

*-There is something engraved here. This...?*

At that moment, the focus blurred. The letters engraved on the rock couldn't be seen. Subtitles popped up.

[It will continue in a moment!]

Then the screen switched to some ads. The customers watching idly in the restaurant started to complain as the advertisements appeared.

“Isn’t dragging it on like this annoying?”

“That’s right. That reporter, I don’t like her pretending to be so pretty either.”

“But what is it about? I’ve never been there before.”

“I have. I feel like puking every time I see a triter now. It was a few days of hard work. I even died once.”

“Idiot. You died to those cows?”

“They aren’t cows. You would turn out the same if you made a mistake.”

The customers in the restaurants started to tell their own stories about Elder Lord. For some time, the latest capsule and electronic devices from the Myeongsong Group were advertised on the TV. The advertising model was a prominent ranker in Elder

Lord.

After the ads were over, Giuseppe appeared on the screen again. The eyes of the customers turned back to the television again.

*-Carved here... what is it...?*

*It is coarse writing, like it was made with a blade!*

The screen was close up so the full sentence didn't appear at first. Giuseppe touched each of the letters by hand.

*-Warrior...*

The screen got further away and the sentence on the rock appeared.

*-A warrior doesn't... attack unarmed people?*

Giuseppe was confused.

*-Who carved this? Warrior? Somehow, I can feel the spirit of chivalry.*

It was at that moment. Giuseppe suddenly turned her head. Her face turned pale.

*-Uhh...?*

The screen convulsed. There was a loud sound, like something had bumped into the camera. A triter. Giuseppe wasn't a strong user so she ran away. The person recording her also ran. The screen kept on shaking.

The moment that the triter was about to reach Giuseppe.

*-Kyaaaaah!*

The screen was overturned. The blue sky of Elder Lord appeared on the screen. The silence continued.

The customers watching the video were confused.

*"...Isn't this a broadcasting accident?"*

"But that isn't a live broadcast."

"Is she dead? Why would they broadcast a death? To show that it's real?"

The customers in the restaurant murmured. At that moment, something appeared on the screen.

".....?"

It was a big hand. Thick fingers were seen first. The customers thought it was a dwarf, but the skin was green. The rough hands filled with calluses filled the screen.

-Heook...

A groan emerged from Giuseppe. The thick hand grabbed what was assumed to be the video recorder's hand. Her body was pulled up and the screen shook again. The sight revealed before them was an orc.

"Orc...?"

The orc had an unusual appearance. First, the black bandana on his head. It was old and faded, like it had been used for a long time. The mark of the Blacksmith Company was engraved on the corner.

Below it was the face of an orc. Intense eyes that glared at them! A big nose, thick lips, and protruding tusks. Fierce tattoos spanned his entire body and there was a huge greatsword on his back. But the most unusual thing was the orc's outfit. There was a red cloth vest over leather armor. In the middle of the vest, a clear cross was drawn with a word embroidered underneath it.

[R.E.S.C.U.E!]

What did 'rescue' mean? Giuseppe couldn't speak and just looked at the orc. The orc looked at her and the person shooting. Then the orc raised a hand.

.....!

The orc raised his thumb and turned around. The back also contained a white cross with words underneath it.

[L.I.F.E.G.U.A.R.D!]

The orc disappeared into the triter hunting grounds. What did they just see?

Rescue, lifeguard. It was like the deep valley rivers, the beach at summer, and the snow-covered ski slopes.

Giuseppe muttered blankly.

*-J-Just now, an orc saved us. What is this?*

The odd situation where an orc that was treated as a monster saved them! But this wasn't the end.

A user hunting a triter appeared on the screen. The user flew through the air. The moment that the triter was about to trample on the user, the triter suddenly bounced away, like it was hit by a strong impact.

Then a black figure jumped towards it. The triter that had just been trying to stand up fell back down as blood emerged. It was a perfect hunt.

The mysterious orc, who saved them previously, was standing in front of the triter with the giant sword. The sight of him holding the greatsword in the middle of the broken triter was magnificent.

Then the orc raised his thumb towards the user.

.....!

It was the coolest thumbs up that they had ever seen. The user bowed and also did a thumbs up. The orc turned around like nothing had happened and sat down on the ground. He watched the people hunting.

Giuseppe hurriedly approached the user who had just been saved.

*-Hello User!*

*-Uh...? Ah, hello?*

*-I am Giuseppe, a reporter from [Surprise! What happened in Elder Lord?]. Please*

*explain the strange scene that I just saw. What is going on?*

*-Ahh... You came for him...*

He pointed to the orc. The orc was just sitting there silently.

*-That... he is a mute orc warrior.*

*-Mute...?*

*-The thing that is occurring here...*

The screen changed to a story. Instead of Giuseppe, the narrator started to explain the orc's story.

The situation was this: He came to the city of elves because he wanted to enter Arnin, but was denied access because he was an orc.

An orc actor appeared for a retelling. Although it was sloppy, he somewhat resembled the orc. As soon as he was about to enter a castle, an elf actor appeared and stood in front of him.

*-You can't access.*

'Is it because I am an orc?' The orc asked through gestures.

*-An orc isn't allowed to enter here!*

*-.....!*

The orc made a despairing pose. The narrator explained.

*-He was shocked to hear that he couldn't enter because he was an orc. However, he found out that there was another way to enter Arnin...*

The orc actor formed a fist and nodded. He headed to the Arnin Plains with a hopeful expression.

*-It is nothing other than hunting monsters on the Arnin Plains. But what he saw was many people suffering while hunting the monsters.*

The orc actor looked sad.

*-He couldn't speak, but he was still a tough orc warrior. He made a decision...*

The orc actor decided something with a firm expression. He started running through the Arnin Plains.

*-He helped those in danger.*

*-The orc saved people.*

The pet pigs representing the triters fell and the orc warrior actor raised his thumb at the person who thanked him.

*-As he can't speak, this thumb is the best way for him to express himself.*

All of a sudden, the atmosphere was reversed.

*-Of course, things weren't always good. One day, a user thought of the orc as a simple monster and struck...*

The orc actor and human actor confronted each other with knives.

*-He was victorious after some difficulty and was on the verge of killing the human.*

The orc and the kneeling human were surrounded by four or five actors. All the humans called for the orc to kill his opponent.

Kill! Kill! Kill!

*-But after all that, he made a difficult decision.*

The orc shook his head. The other actors were shocked by his decision. 'Why?' They protested. The orc looked distressed as he wasn't able to speak.

*-Instead of answering with words, the orc inscribed his will on the rock with his sword.*

The orc actor aimed the knife at a rock. Then the screen changed and illuminated the giant rock that actually existed on the Arnin Plains.

[A warrior doesn't attack unarmed people.]

-*It was this.*

For a moment, it shone. 'Ohhh'. The sound of an audience cheering was produced as an audio effect.

-*This is all true.*

It changed to an interview screen. All of the users had mosaics on their faces, but they all praised the orc.

-*He is reliable. Really.*

-*I can't even count the number of times my life was saved because of him. A truly great person.*

-*The name? Um, he can't talk.*

-*I don't know how it happened. But this much is clear. We were mistaken about orcs.*

-*He is...*

-*Genuine...*

-*Genuine...*

-*A true...*

The interviewers all finished simultaneously.

-*A warrior.*

The screen was switched. Giuseppe followed the orc.

-*Orc! Orc!*

-.....

The orc seemed annoyed as Giuseppe followed him. In the end, the [Surprise! What

happened in Elder Lord?] production team couldn't get an interview with him. Giuseppe was forced to finish the program in front of the rock carved by the orc.

*-Unfortunately, I was unable to interview him. It is a shame, but the sentence that he left behind tells us who he is on its own.*

The sentence shone again on the screen.

'A warrior doesn't attack unarmed people.'

Many things were implied with the sentence.

*-Although he is a NPC, it seems that we have a lot to learn from him. Especially at this time, when many ethical problems are being raised about Elder Lord. I hope you have enjoyed this wonderful, delightful and warm Elder Lord life. This was Giuseppe, a reporter from [Surprise! What happened in Elder Lord?].*

She waved her hand. At the same time, the camera rose into the sky and captured both her and the rock. It continued to climb up until the rock looked like a toy, capturing the image of the plains and the blue sky of Elder Lord.

The narrator finished.

*-The nameless orc. I hope his life as a great warrior will last for a long time.*

The broadcast closed with this voice and some music. The program ended.

The restaurant's customers rose from their seats.

"That was amazing. Was that really an orc?"

"Really. Aren't there many witnesses on the Internet? It is more interesting to see it directly."

"The orc is great."

"Are you doing anything now?"

"Where did he go? People will come and watch."

“Hey, do you want to try becoming an orc?”

“Yes.”

The university students left the restaurant. When they talked about the program they just saw, all of them usually asked one question.

“That orc, what is he doing now?”



“.....”

Elwina, the elf guard at Arnin’s gate, looked at the orc in front of her in surprise.

This was the first time that someone had raised their reputation so quickly. It usually took a month of focused hunting.

In addition, his pass wasn’t just a permit. It was an honorary citizenship granted by the Arnin Plains administrator. It was an honourable title only given to those who did great achievements in Arnin. He would be treated as a citizen of Arnin.

Elwina’s heart started pounding. The orc had really solved the task he was given. He was much more wonderful than she had thought.

“I-Incredible. I’m not surprised so don’t be mistaken.”

Elwina tried to say calmly. The orc didn’t answer.

“What, are you ignoring people now?”

“.....”

“Why do you keep... ah.”

The orc was pointing at his mouth.

Elwina blushed. “Ah, that’s right. I had forgotten. When I think back, I think I used too much strength. I didn’t know it would still last. Well, I’m sorry.”

She dismissed the magic. Silence was disabled.

“So now...”

“Hey, elf with no manners.”

“W-What?”

“Because of you...!”

She looked at Crockta with a hurt expression. Crockta looked at the beautiful elf and changed his next words.

“...So pretty.”

“Oh my god.”

“Well then, I’ll see you later. No offense, pretty elf guard.”

The Crockta confidently headed through the gates. Elwina stared blankly at his back. She felt a strange feeling.

Then someone spoke to her. “Young Lady.”

“...Don’t call me that. I am now a guard.”

“The mayor is calling.”

“Mother?”

Elwina was confused.

“She said to stop being a guard.”

“Please tell her that I will do as I want.”

“If Young Lady doesn’t return home right now, then she will sell all of your collection...”

“I understand. I will go back.”

Elwina sighed.

# **CHAPTER 34**

## **CONTRAST (1)**

---

Crockta wasn't impressed as he finally entered the elven city of Arnin.

Of course, everything was well organized. The scale of the buildings was enormous, and the beautiful elves smelling the leaves of the trees looked like the gods from Greek mythology. But it wasn't any more grandiose than Orcrox Fortress. Apart from the elves' buildings being whiter with their aesthetic tastes, the level of construction in the city was similar to that in Orcrox.

So he wasn't impressed like the elf guiding him expected.

"It has been a long time since I've seen an orc. How about it, isn't our city beautiful compared to what you are used to?"

Crockta nodded slightly.

"Look, this building is in the latest Bellitran style. It is an architectural style developed by the elf architect, Bellitran. It was a revolution. There was an uproar in the capital. To emphasize the depths..."

"Where is Ilya?

Crockta interrupted. The elf pouted with dissatisfaction.

"Don't be in a hurry. Once you learn more about Arnin..."

"I didn't come here to play."

Crockta looked around. There were only two species in Arnin, humans and elves. They were mostly elves, and occasionally humans could be seen. But most users were humans. In his eyes, they all seemed suspicious, like they were members of the Thawing Balhae Clan.

"Oh, you are urgent. Too urgent. I know why you came here, but you shouldn't live like that."

“.....”

“Okay. Follow me.”

The elf raised a hand to Crockta's shoulder. He turned away from the residential area of Arnin where they were walking into an alley between two buildings. The elf increased his pace. Arnin was filled with greenery, so it wasn't hard to keep up with his movements. He jumped between trees like a monkey and led Crockta to a hidden place in the city.

Soon, an entire forest was revealed. There was a lush forest inside the city. As the elf ran through the forest, his form temporarily couldn't be seen. Crockta sped up as he headed in the direction that the elf had disappeared.

It was a while before Crockta caught up with him again. The elf was sitting at a round wooden table in the middle of the forest.

“This place?”

“I have fond childhood memories here. It is also a safe place.”

The elf grinned.

“I am Ilya.”

“I guessed so.”

“Is that so? Huhu. I was surprised when Derek suddenly said he would help me... It is even more surprising that the person sent is an orc.”

He waved his hand. The magic power swayed and a few leaves fell into his hands. He arranged them on top of the table. “Our objective is the same, so let's join hands.”

“Please explain in detail.”

“You want to get rid of the group of cursed people called Thawing Balhae. I want to get rid of the corrupt people who colluded with Thawing Balhae and establish a clean order in Arnin.”

“Corrupt?”

“Who is the corrupt person?”

Ilya placed three leaves on the round table and picked up one of them. It had a hole in it from where a worm had bitten through. Ilya raised it to his eyes. His blue eyes were visible through the hole.

“Arnin’s mayor, Elsanad.”

Crockta nodded. He recalled Derek’s voice.

‘I have planned a few investments on the premise that you are successful in your revenge.’

Derek was betting on the collapse of the Arnin mayor. Crockta looked into Ilya’s eyes. Derek was absolutely not a good person. It was hard to believe in Ilya if he had a good relationship with Derek.

Ilya shrugged.

“All you have to do is hit the Thawing Balhae Clan with me. I will take care of the rest, so don’t worry.”

“...Um.”

But Crockta wasn’t a good person either. His goal was a bloody revenge. Therefore, he would join hands with Ilya for the collapse of a common enemy.

“I understand.”

“It sounds like you have decided to do it together with me, so let me explain in more detail.”

Ilya placed a hand on the round table. Suddenly, the wind blew away the leaves.

“In the past, Mayor Elsanad and I were friends. She was a dear friend of mine.”

His eyes became distant as he recalled the past.

“We once wanted to make Arnin a happy place for everyone. We were young. I helped her to become the mayor. However, she gradually changed. After getting the taste of

power, she changed. Now she isn't the Elsanad that I knew anymore."

"Is this related to the Thawing Balhae Clan?"

"Of course. She is conspiring with those cursed by the stars called Thawing Balhae... they started elf trafficking and the reconstruction of the city."

"....."

"The people you want to kill are the dogs of Mayor Elsanad, the ones enjoying profit from her. Here, let me show you."

Ilya beckoned to the air. Then two elves walked out from among the bushes. Crockta wasn't surprised since he had noticed them. Ilya introduced them, "They are my friends."

"It is nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you."

They greeted Crockta. They felt something unusual in the orc's eyes. Crockta greeted them.

"Are you alive? I am the orc Crockta."

Ilya explained Crockta's words. "This is an orc greeting."

The two elves moved. The group left the forest where the round table was located, heading in the opposite direction from the way Crockta entered.

Crockta frowned as he saw the landscape outside of the forest. It was far from the glamorous Arnin that he saw earlier. There were crumbling buildings and houses that were just barely keeping their shape. These were the streets of the poor. It was like looking at the back alleys of Anail.

"I showed you Arnin's sunny spot earlier, while this is Arnin's shade. Nobody cares about this place."

Suddenly, there was a disturbance. Ilya placed his finger to his lips in a 'shh' gesture. They approached the place through some shade.

“.....!”

Crockta's eyes widened.

A group of humans were kidnapping an elf in front of an old house. The elf's mouth was covered with a towel and her body restrained so that she couldn't move. The captured elf was twisting her body to resist, but she couldn't go against the strength of many. A kidnapping was taking place in broad daylight.

“Damn!”

Crockta tried to run out. However, Ilya grabbed Crockta. His body was greatly shaking. Ilya looked startled as he saw Crockta's arm trembling.

“Calm down.”

“Look at that...!”

“I know where they are going.”

“.....!”

“They are the small fries. Taking care of them will just make their leaders more vigilant. We must wipe them all out.”

The kidnappers disappeared with the elf. Crockta took deep breaths to try and calm his anger.

“You have a strong sense of justice. I'm really surprised.”

“.....”

Ilya said, “Hang in there. I also want to save her right now. But numerous other women, children, and men have disappeared this way. We have to save them as well.”

“Doesn't Arnin have security forces or guards?”

“They do, but they don't come here. It is an abandoned area.”

“.....”

"One or two people will disappear and the empty houses will become a rich elven villa."

He pointed to a distant place. New buildings were going up in that area. Elves and humans alike were sweating as they built a mansion. It was strange comparing the large building to the old and ruined houses.

Crockta asked,

"What about the kidnapped people?"

"There are only a few options. Sold into slavery, selling their bodies, or worse."

Ilya placed an arm over Crockta's shoulder.

"I also feel the emotions that you are currently feeling."

They looked around the slums for a while before entering the center of Arnin through the forest. It was a stunning city compared to the streets that he had just seen. Elves were smiling as they walked the streets, looking like they were from photographs of famous brands.

But it no longer looked beautiful to Crockta.

"I'll introduce you to the inn where you will be staying for the time being."

"When will the plan begin?"

"Tomorrow, or maybe as early as tonight."

Crockta nodded.

"I know that orc warriors are tough, but there are many enemies. Be well prepared."

Ilya guided Crockta to his accommodations. It was a small inn located on the corner of the main street. The owner was an old friend of Ilya's. He was surprised to see an orc but nodded at Ilya's description. Then he welcomed Crockta.

"It is the first time I will have an orc guest, hahahat! You are really big and strong. Elves aren't like this. Kuhuhuhut!"

Despite being an elf, the owner had rugged muscles. There were a few muscular people among the elves.

"Yes, aren't you a little bit heavy? What is your weight? Is it three times mine? Hahat!"

"....."

"Next time, you should exercise with me. Hahat!"

Ilya paid for the inn.

Crockta put down his luggage, left the inn, and looked around Arnin. The rare appearance of an orc drew the attention of the elves. Crockta ignored their gazes and reached the fountain in the center of the main street.

"Can I ask you one thing?"

He talked to a young man sitting idly at the fountain. He was a human and he seemed to be thinking as he stared into the air. Then he looked startled as Crockta appeared.

"Wow, an orc! How surprising. What did you want to know?"

"What is Mayor Elsanad like?"

"Elsanad? She is an excellent mayor. She has made Arnin prosperous."

"Is that so?"

"I hope she will be elected again. There is an upcoming election. I will vote as a citizen of Arnin."

Crockta nodded.

"So she has no problems?"

"Problem... I heard that she's worried that her daughter isn't listening to her. Why? Do you want citizenship here?"

"Something similar."

“Haha, Arnin is a livable city. Welcome.”

“I will think about it. By the way, what were you thinking about so intently just now?”

“Ah... in fact...” The young man struggled to open his mouth. “The person I love... how to... I want to confess... what do you think about expressing my heart publicly? Would you be impressed?”

“.....”

“I’m going to do a surprise event after calling her. I’ll make a heart with candles and serenade her, singing publicly in front of many people...”

Crockta shook his head. “Get rid of that.”

“...Huh?”

“Listen to my words.”

“T-Then...”

“Rather than a spectacular event, your sincerity will work better.”

“...Ah...”

“It is better to confess your heart when the both of you are alone.”

Like this, he saved the life of the young man. Crockta finished the conversation and got up from his spot.

Something had been irritating him from the beginning. Crockta turned his head. There was an elf looking at him from the middle of a crowd. He smiled as he noticed Crockta’s gaze. Crockta approached him.

It was Ilya.

“Are you following me?”

“Yes, something like that. Please understand. Derek sent you, but I can’t trust you straight away.”

He cleared his throat and placed an arm around Crockta's shoulder. Then he lowered his voice. "I heard your conversation with that young man."

"....."

"Just like that young man, Arnin's citizens are being deceived. Everybody thinks she is a good person. The truth is... what we saw. The awful truth."

Crockta and Ilya moved with their shoulders close to each other. As Crockta walked a little bit, he saw Ilya's colleagues. They whispered something to Ilya.

"The date is decided. Tonight, we will move."

"....."

"I will stop by the inn at midnight. I'll see you then. Please be prepared."

Crockta nodded. Ilya licked his lips before saying something else. "Right now, your anger at their misdeeds is vivid. I have been waiting for someone with a strong sense of justice like you to come."

He grinned. "Arnin needs people like you. Welcome. Then..."

He disappeared into the crowd with his group.

Crockta considered his words. A sense of justice. It didn't fit at all. He was angry at the scene, but that didn't mean that it was due to a sense of justice. Crockta looked in the direction that Ilya had disappeared in for a while. His eyes blazed.

He just had common sense.

# **CHAPTER 35**

## **CONTRAST (2)**

---

The moon could be seen through the window.

Crockta wore his greatsword on his back, walking past the crowded pub on the inn's first floor and heading outside. The cool night air woke up his senses.

"You're early."

Ilya and his companions were waiting. They wore masks covering their faces. Only their eyes shone in the darkness.

"Quickly. The sooner the better."

Arnin was quiet at night. Except for some pubs that opened until dawn, they all turned off their lights.

They moved quickly, rushing through the forest. They soon reached the slums that they had visited during the day. It was a street covered in darkness. As they stood there, it seemed like darkness was the only thing they could see.

The slums were darker than the other areas of Arnin, all black without a single house lit up. Only the faint traces of moonlight filtered through the air without reaching the ground. Ilya whispered and created a faint, feeble fire that only revealed the immediate surroundings. Ilya gestured, as if to follow him.

Ilya arrived at a broken down building in a corner of the slums and released the fire. He took a deep breath and approached. As they listened, a faint sound was heard from inside the building.

.....

Ilya raised a finger to his mouth. Quiet. They killed any noise and stepped closer. The dialogue leaked through.

"If this is successful, then won't it be the second largest one?"

“Exactly.”

“There are many old men standing in line for elves.”

“Some of them have low assimilation rates...”

Assimilation rate. They were words that indicated that these were users. Crockta quietly raised a hand to the doorknob. It wasn’t locked. They exchanged glances.

Ilya gathered both hands together and muttered. Moisture was drawn from the air and became a sphere of water. Ilya summoned two in the air and then whispered.

“Enter quietly.”

Crockta and the elves nodded.

Ilya gave a signal. The water spheres flew through the air. Crockta quickly opened the door and plunged in.

The two humans sitting at the table were shocked by the sudden intrusion, but they had to cover their heads as the water spheres hit them. They were trapped in the water sphere and couldn’t breathe properly.

One of them was stabbed in the abdomen. The elves handled the other one. Both became unconscious and fell to the ground. Crockta tied up the users with the prepared rope and gagged them. The members of the Thawing Balhae Clan were thrown into a corner after being suppressed in an instant.

“Underground.”

Ilya started searching the floor. His hand grabbed something and lifted it up. There were stairs to the basement. Light was coming from the bottom. Faint words could be heard.

“There will be more down there.”

Then Ilya looked at the elves.

“As Crockta wants, overpower instead of killing those cursed by the stars.”

"Yes."

"Let's go."

The elves entered. Crockta followed. As they went down, a somewhat remodeled basement appeared. They slowly advanced. There was a tunnel that was like a mine shaft. At first, it looked rushed, but then an orderly structure started to appear. There was a bend in the path.

A sound was heard. Crockta stopped in his tracks.

".....?"

Ilya tried to ask. However, a scream rang out. They looked at each other for a moment. Then they all ran forward at the same time. They doubted their eyes as they went beyond the bend.

A horrifying sight.

Two humans were raping a female elf. They repeatedly punched and kicked her when she resisted, as if they had no interest in the woman's life. The woman lying underneath the men already had bruises and scars all over her body.

Another human was sitting at the table and giggling like it was funny. Behind him, a prison with steel bars were visible and countless elves were confined like dogs inside. It looked like hell.

The empty eyes of the female elf was like a doll as she turned her head towards Crockta. At that moment, her eyes seemed to shake.

Crockta angrily pulled out his greatsword. His sword shone in the light. The humans turned as they noticed the presence of an intruder.

"W-What?"

Crockta rushed in. Ilya and his elves followed.

First, he attacked the man raping the elf. The body of a man flew back from Crockta's attack and hit the steel bars. A few of the trapped elves looked up at the frenzy.

Crockta stabbed the stomach of the other human, controlling his strength so that the man wouldn't die. He forced the opponent's legs off balance with his greatsword. The moment he was about to turn his blade towards the other person,

A spherical fireball flew at him.

".....!"

Crockta hurriedly lifted his greatsword. However, before it hit him, the fireball slammed into an invisible barrier and disappeared. Crockta turned to see the smiling Ilya.

"Please be careful."

"Thank you."

Crockta expressed his gratitude and slammed his knee into the human's face. The human's teeth flew through the air.

Ilya's colleagues were also proficient in battle. The Thawing Balhae Clan members resisted with intense aggression and the fighting became longer. It was some time after the launch of Elder Lord, so the users had developed.

However, the situation changed when Crockta exerted his power. A limb flew into the air every time Crockta's greatsword moved. The lost limbs wriggled on the floor.

"Kuk... this..."

"How did you know... kuk..."

Crockta kicked their mouths. It cracked together and broke. Then they were tied up and gagged. The Thawing Balhae members realized what was happening. They were shocked and struggled fiercely, but they couldn't stop Crockta. His burly hands tied up the struggling users in turn.

In the end, all of the Thawing Balhae members here were overpowered.

Ilya recovered his breathing and looked at Crockta.

"The work isn't over yet."

He found a bunch of keys and handed it over to his colleagues. The prison doors opened and the elves were released.

"There are a few more places like this."

Crockta nodded.

The night wasn't over yet.



They raided several more bases through the night. Gradually, the level of the Thawing Balhae Clan members increased. Some people in Ilya's group were injured. Crockta was almost hit by a blow but managed to escape.

So far, they had saved dozens of elves.

"This is the last one."

They walked towards the house. It was bigger than the previous places they visited.

All of them were in a mess due to the lasting battle. Thawing Balhae's response was stronger because they already communicated with each other. This was the last one and the enemies would be ready.

As expected, powerful magic hit them as soon as they entered the house.

"Ugh!"

The shield spell that Ilya had prepared blocked the magic. However, the shock was conveyed, causing Ilya to turn pale. He would be queasy for a bit.

"It is a very well made game. NPCs can cause such unexpected events."

One man walked out.

Crockta's face stiffened. He had seen that face somewhere. It was the man standing next to the magician of the Thawing Balhae clan at Lenox's last battle. But he didn't seem to recognize Crockta. He looked at Crockta and Ilya's companions before lifting his spear.

“I will get the orc.”

“.....”

“Your activities... ends here.”

He pointed his spear at Crockta. The other clan members also raised the weapons, ready to rush forward at any time. The enemies were numerically superior, but the personal skills of Crockta and Ilya's group were outstanding. If the battle lasted too long, then reinforcements might come.

It needed to be lightning quick.

The two sides collided. Crockta's greatsword hit the man's spear. The man maintained his distance and stabbed the spear at Crockta. Crockta evaded, but the speed was faster than he expected, causing him to be hit in the thigh.

“Keuk!”

The cut wasn't deep. The pain caused his movements to become uncomfortable. Crockta wiped his thigh and grasped his greatsword.

The man grinned. “Orc... It would be difficult if I had a low level, but not anymore. Not anymore.”

He stepped back and forth. He was holding a spear, but his movements were reminiscent of boxing. Crockta moved forward and wielded his greatsword. The man quickly retreated, and then his spear aimed for the gap in Crockta's movements. The target was Crockta's shoulders.

“Take this, bastard orc!”

But Crockta's shoulder twisted flexibly as he avoided the stab. Then he grabbed the spear with his arm and pulled. The man tried to hold on, but he couldn't overcome Crockta's muscular strength. Crockta spun his body.

His body was swung around Crockta and then slammed into the ground.

“Kuhak!”

It was a clean move. Crockta tried to stab the man with the greatsword, but another clan member attacked him. Unfortunately, Crockta was forced to back off...

He looked around and saw that all of the other elves were on the defensive. It was a tiring battle and it wasn't easy due to the difference in numbers.

"Hu. More than I thought..." Ilya muttered. The eyes above the mask frowned. "I am going to have to use some strength. Protect me."

The elves gathered around Ilya. There was a powerful wave of magic power. The gazes of man who got up with the support of a clan member turned towards Ilya. He felt something suspicious and aimed his spear towards Ilya.

Crockta blocked him. The man looked at Crockta and twisted his lips like he was annoyed.

"You asshole..."

He raised his spear.

"Everyone attack him!"

He pointed towards Ilya. The Thawing Balhae members charged towards Ilya. The elves thwarted them. While the clan members and elves fought, Ilya's spell was being completed. The chant was in its final stages. Something started to emerge over Ilya's head.

"...Fuck!"

The man confronting Crockta threw his spear at this moment. It was a powerful throw. Crockta hurriedly tried to stop it with his greatsword, but he was too late. It aimed straight towards Ilya. Ilya had his eyes closed, so he didn't know about the spear.

Crockta didn't even have time to yell. The spear passed by Ilya.

".....!"

The chant stopped.

"Huu..." Ilya wiped the sweat off his forehead. The spear aimed at Ilya had narrowly

passed him and struck the wall, leaving a long scar on Ilya's cheek. At the same time, his mask was torn. Ilya's face was revealed.

"I almost died."

Ilya laughed as he wiped at the wound on his cheek. The chant had been completed. Something unknown was waving its tail above his head.

It had the appearance of a long snake made of water. It seemed to be a dragon at first sight. Then it spread its wings and opened its mouth. Cold air emerged and lowered the surrounding temperature. It was an elemental summoned by Ilya.

The Thawing Balhae members fell back.

Crockta's eyes headed back to the enemy. The man who threw the spear was now weaponless. He was scheduled to receive 'concrete'. But his expression was strange.

"You..."

He was staring at Ilya, not Crockta. But Ilya shouted before he could speak.

"Undine! Attack!"

The summoned dragon penetrated the man's body. He screamed in pain and fell to the ground.

".....!"

His body changed into white particles. He was dead. Crockta stared at Ilya.

"Right now, we are in a hurry. There is no time to capture everyone since reinforcements are coming. I know your situation, but please understand."

"...I understand."

Crockta nodded. The fight began again. After Ilya summoned Undine, the battle turned to their advantage. The Clan members were either killed or captured. All of the Thawing Balhae members in this city had been swept away.

The group explored the interior of the house and found more victims. The rescued

elves thanked Ilya and Crockta. But Ilya seemed to be searching for something else.

“It is really here.”

After going through the house for a while, Ilya emerged with something. It was a thick book.

“It is a book.”

Ilya quickly confirmed the contents. The letters inside the book made it look like a ledger. A smile flashed on his face.

“This is a record of all the dirty dealings between them and Elsanad.”

# **CHAPTER 36**

## **CONTRAST (3)**

---

“I know why you are so obsessed with being a guard,” Elsanad spoke.

She was checking the shape of her earrings in the mirror. When she touched it with her fingers, the transparent earrings moved and scattered light at various angles. Elsanad was satisfied with the brilliance and quietly laughed.

The reflection in the mirror showed Elwina’s sour expression.

“But how long can you keep it up?”

“I will do it for as long as I want.”

“There is good in the world Elwina, as well as poison.”

Elsanad rose from her seat.

She spent most of her day working as the highly respected mayor of Arnin. The only personal time she had to herself was when she prepared her appearance before going to the city hall in the morning. As an elf, she was sensitive about her appearance and painstakingly managed it.

Elwina, who inherited her blood, was no different from her. Fortunately, both of them had prominent beauty among elves, and were never dissatisfied because of their appearance. However, unique hobbies would form due to their high sense of aesthetics.

In Elwina’s case, it was dolls.

“There won’t be much room for your collections anymore.”

She made the dolls directly. There was only one of them in the world so she appreciated their unique charms.

“I’m tired of pretty elves. I need new materials.”

As a guard, she was able to see many groups of people travelling to Arnin. The strangers and members of other species gave her a type of inspiration different from the elves.

“It is awkward because you’ve only loved elves. Then are you planning on making an orc doll?”

“.....”

Elwina didn’t answer, so Elsanad turned towards her. Her daughter had a confused expression on her face. Elsanad burst out laughing.

“Elwina, I’m glad that you are forsaking the prejudice against other species, but I am worried about your blush all of a sudden. Did you meet an orc?”

“That’s right.”

“It has been a really long time since an orc has entered Arnin. Maybe it is a good thing for Arnin.”

Elsanad rose from her seat. In her elegant dress, beautiful earrings, and necklace, she looked like a goddess from a piece of artwork. Elsanad’s secretary, who was watching them talk, opened the door.

“Mayor, it is time to go.”

“I understand.”

Just before she left the room, she looked at her adorable daughter Elwina. “Daughter. I know I have been negligent towards you since your childhood. I have always felt sorry about that.”

“It’s nothing.”

“Come here.”

Elsanad stretched out her hands and hugged Elwina, patting her on the back. Elwina looked at the secretary like she was embarrassed by the sudden embrace, but she soon hugged her mother back.

“I am your mother, but I am also the mother of all of the citizens in Arnin.

“I’m aware of that. You don’t have to worry. You’ve always said that since I was a child.”

“I appreciate your understanding. If you can live in a happier and more beautiful Arnin, isn’t it worth it?”

Elsanad released Elwina from her arms.

“Most of the plans that I first thought about are currently ongoing. Once I am mayor again after the election, I will do what I can for Arnin.”

“Yes...”

“At that time, I want to retire and spend more time with you.”

Elwina nodded.

“Next time, show me your dolls again. They are beautiful.”

“...Yes.”

Elwina smiled. Elsanad touched her daughter’s cheeks. She was a stubborn daughter, but she looked like an angel when she smiled. She was reminded of her dead husband.

“Then, I’ll be going.”

“Goodbye.”

Elsanad kissed her daughter on the cheek and left the room. Her secretary followed. As soon as they left home, she turned to business straight away. “How are they? Is it going well in the slums?”

“Of course.”

“I’m glad. It is my long-cherished wish, so I am sorry that I felt any doubts.”

They entered a carriage. As the carriage moved through Arnin, citizens waved and greeted their mayor. Elsanad smiled at the citizens through the window.

“Everybody is happy, I think.”

“It is all thanks to you.”

“The old Arnin wasn’t beautiful. It made me sick.”

Elsanad’s secretary, Alsein shrugged.

He was firmly dedicated to his boss, Elsanad. However, her passion and enthusiasm was solely based on her own strict standards of beauty. This often led to gaps between ideals and reality. It was his role to point this out.

“The citizens of the slums will also smile like that,” Elsanad said.

“They will.”

“Huhuhut.”

“Just...”

“Just?”

“The cost of the new buildings seems to be excessive. Don’t just try to make it pretty when building. I know that you are sensitive to beauty, but you have to compromise. In particular, the statue of benevolence in the slums is a bit...”

“...Isn’t it okay?”

“It won’t work. It is a waste of money.”

“...Really?”

“Yes. I strongly oppose it.”

Elsanad’s ears dropped. Alsein’s heart weakened, but he didn’t give in as he declared, “It is nonsense.”

“I understand. I will take care of it.”

“Thank you.”

Elsanad wanted to build a statue of the Goddess of Mercy in the slums. It would look good, but the cost was a problem. She was crestfallen, but Alsein pretended not to know. She looked out the window and suddenly laughed.

“Alsein, look. A sheep cloud.”

Alsein’s gaze moved. A cloud in the sky was shaped like a sheep. It was a rare and beautiful sight. Elsanad’s eyes lit up like a girl who liked pretty things.

“Pretty.”

Elsanad grabbed Alsein’s shoulder and enjoyed it. Alsien also smiled.



Crockta wiped out the Thawing Balhae Clan, which had been committing evils in Arnin. Most of the clan members were rendered unable to play the game, and Ian got some revenge for Lenox. But the Thawing Balhae Clan wasn’t based only in Arnin.

Arnin was just the beginning. He still had to clear them from a few other cities. However, Derek’s contract still remained. Crockta’s work in Arnin wasn’t over yet. These were the conditions.

Kill Elsanad, or help Ilya win the election and become mayor.

According to the contract, he could kill those who took part in the crime. Derek’s goal was to make his business partner, Ilya, hold the reins of power in Arnin. If Mayor Elsanad was killed, and if her wicked deeds were publicized, things would become easier.

But Crockta decided to watch some more. It was sufficient if Ilya was elected mayor.

Ilya was questionable.

There were many suspicious and unknown things about him. No matter how long he had been preparing, he knew all of the information about the Thawing Balhae Clan and guided Crockta through their secret passages. Most of all, the man who seemed to be the leader of the Thawing Balhae clan in Arnin was surprised when he saw Ilya’s face.

Then Ilya had blocked the man's mouth by killing him.

Crockta, Jung Ian, had gone through all types of things as a soldier. He wasn't always on the right side. He often saw those involved in power cover the truth with deception and move people according to their will.

To him, his task here was over so he was just playing around now. Thus, he didn't intervene anymore and just watched Ilya.

"Arnin's citizens! I have something I must tell you. It is the truth. The dirty and ugly truth."

Ilya stood in the square and shouted at people.

It was Arnin's election season. Support for Elsanad was overwhelming, so the vote was close to a formality. They would run the competition, but the winner would always be Elsanad.

But this time might be different.

"What type of person is Elsanad? A clean person? A mayor who makes sacrifices for Arnin? If so, you have been tricked. She isn't such a person."

Ilya shouted. His words, enhanced through magic, rang out through the square. The citizens passing by stopped. It was irritating to hear such things about their beautiful mayor. The citizens were interested in what Ilya was saying.

"As you all know, not every place in Arnin is beautiful. There are slums. You don't want to see it or admit it, but Arnin doesn't just consist of rich elves like you. There are the poor and persecuted. And Elsanad!"

He spoke about how Elsanad joined with those cursed by the stars, trafficking and enslaving elves through them.

The citizens didn't believe it. To them, Elsanad absolutely wasn't such a person.

But Ilya held the clear evidence high in the air.

"Take a look at this book! All of their transactions with Elsanad have been recorded here!"

Ilya opened the book and thrust it before the eyes of the spectators. It agitated the crowd. Ilya didn't stop. His powerful voice resonated in the square. People started to believe his words.

Ilya's fellow elves among the crowd led the response.

Crockta watched silently and turned away. Ilya was suspicious, but Crockta had no evidence. Whether it was true or false wasn't his problem. Crockta just wanted revenge for Lenox. It wasn't the same as justice. It was up to them to do their share.

At that moment...

There was a disturbance in a corner of the square. Mayor Elsanad's carriage had appeared. City Hall was just across the square so Elsanad was confronted with Ilya as she arrived at work. The citizens had interested expressions on their faces.

Elsanad didn't know what was happening and just wanted to pass through the square. But Ilya blocked her horse-drawn carriage. The driver asked him to move aside but Ilya was adamant.

"Elsanad! Reveal the truth! You can't fool us anymore!"

The driver spoke inside the carriage. Then the carriage door opened and Elsanad stuck her head out. The citizens shouted as her beautiful face was exposed.

"...Ilya?"

Elsanad's eyes widened. Ilya's expression didn't change as he approached her and shouted,

"Elsanad! All of your crimes are recorded here! Are you pretending not to know? You are a corrupt mayor who sold the elves to those who are cursed for the sake of your own self-interest!"

"Ilya, this..."

At that time, Alsein spoke to the driver of the carriage. He had a sense of what Ilya was trying to do. "Move around that person. Leave now."

"Alsein?"

"Let's go. Mayor, please ignore this. That person is trying to incite the citizens. You don't need to deal with it."

"But..."

"There is no need to move as he desires. Just go. Leave now."

The driver moved the horses. The carriage redirected and moved around Ilya to leave the square. Ilya looked back and shouted louder.

"Look at this! Elsanad is avoiding the truth and running away."

The crowd murmured. A smile appeared on Ilya's face. He once again raised his voice.

"Let's find out the truth about Elsanad, who has lied to the citizens!"

# **CHAPTER 37**

## **TRUTH (1)**

---

Crockta snuck through the slums to search for the remaining members of the Thawing Balhae Clan, but none remained. There were no noticeable users in the vicinity. It seems like they had withdrawn from Arnin.

The elves living in the slums were at work, so it was quiet. Only the voices of the workmen building in the slums were occasionally heard. Were they doing something wrong?

Crockta wandered for a while before suddenly stopping in front of the construction site.

“.....!”

Crockta's eyes widened. It was due to the appearance of the sweaty workers holding the construction tools.

“Hey! Move carefully! Don't get hurt!”

“Whew, why am I doing this in a game?”

“That's what I said.”

A white star was shining on the foreheads of the workers. Crockta examined each one of their faces. There were NPCs, but the majority of them were users. They were wearing protective gear and using construction place jargon like they were actual builders.

“Hey, Orc!”

A man sitting on the floor and drinking water waved at Crockta. He also had a white star on his forehead.

“This is the first time I've seen an orc in Arnin! If you want to build a house then tell me! We can make it for cheap!”

Crockta looked at the entrance of the construction site. The sign, 'Kangaroo Construction' was hung there. Below was an advertisement for prompt construction at low prices. Crockta asked,

"Are you people cursed by the stars?"

"Eh? How do you know?" The man was confused. "Well, we are cursed but... does it matter? We are cursed, but we build for a cheap price, and we do it quickly. So if you have some land, tell me. We will build it nicely. Hahaha!"

They were users who enjoyed the architectural field in Elder Lord. Their deft movements indicated that they were people who actually worked in the construction industry. There was a brief overview of the construction posted at the entrance of the construction site.

[Name of Project: New construction of the 'Benevolence Medical Aid'

Client: Arnin City

Contractor: Kangaroo Construction

Building Usage: Public medical and support for the underprivileged facility.]

Crockta scrutinized it carefully and the man shrugged.

"Do you need a job? An orc should have enough strength so do you want to try it?"

"No. Do you know the Thawing Balhae Clan?"

"Thawing Balhae? I know." The man nodded. "They connected us to the mayor here. They are quite dishonorable, but we didn't have a choice. Do you know them?"

"I don't know."

"I see. Be careful not to tangle with them. It seems like they are doing bad things to amuse themselves. NPCs, no, they don't like orcs. Haha."

The overseer called out to the man. He got up from his seat.

"I'm going, I'm going! So Brother, stop wagging your tongue!"

The man ran back and continued working on the construction. Crockta looked after him thoughtfully. Ilya had said that this building would become a villa for the rich elves, but that wasn't it. It was a medical facility for the poor. His mind became complicated.

Ilya.

His face popped into Crockta's head. He seemed friendly, but his real intentions were unknown. The surprised Thawing Balhae member seemed to know Ilya. He was killed by Ilya before he could open his mouth.

Ilya made a deal with Derek. Derek wasn't a good man. Rather, it was the opposite. Derek and Crockta just joined hands to use each other. Crockta absolutely didn't trust Derek.

Was he being deceived?

Crockta sighed. His purpose was revenge on the Thawing Balhae Clan. It wasn't necessary to worry about other things. Whether he was being used or not, it was sufficient if he wiped out the Thawing Balhae Clan.

Therefore, he tried to turn away. But something kept nagging at him, making his heart uncomfortable. He stood still to think about it. Crockta closed his eyes and looked into his heart.

Ah. Crockta opened his eyes.

It was him. He was there. He was watching Crockta from the bottom of his heart.

"I understand Lenox."

Crockta touched his chest. The scar created by Lenox's axe would be there forever, along with the laws of a warrior that he preached. Before he left Arnin, he needed to know the truth about what was happening in this city. It wasn't too late to decide how to act after confirming the truth.

Crockta moved again.



Enyanis, the plains administrator, looked between the two people who came to visit him with a difficult expression.

“What are you...”

One of them was the orc warrior Crockta, whom Enyanis had directly granted an honorary citizenship. The other person was his friend, Secretary Alsein, who was Elsanad’s shadow.

“Crockta, sit down. Alsein, what are you doing here?”

Enyanis served tea. The three of them were facing each other in the drawing room. Crockta didn’t know who Alsein was and got straight to the point.

“Enyanis, I have a question.”

Enyanis nodded. It was the first time hearing the orc’s voice. After becoming an honorary citizen, Enyanis learned that Crockta had been unable to speak due to Silence magic.

“What is Elsanad like as a mayor?”

Then Alsein looked at Crockta. Why was an orc asking about the mayor of this city?

Enyanis burst out laughing. “It is funny that you are asking me this when this friend is right in front of you. Maybe it is because of the disturbance that happened yesterday...”

Enyanis pointed to Alsein. “He is the mayor’s secretary.”

Crockta looked at Alsein. Alsein greeted him lightly.

Enyanis said, “For the answer, I’m not saying this as his friend, but I personally think she is wonderful. Everyone’s opinion is different, but I respect Elsanad. I don’t believe Ilya’s words.”

“Do you know Ilya?”

"I know. Alsein, did you come because of Ilya?"

Alsein nodded.

"I know that he once worked with Elsanad. I heard that after Elsanad first became mayor, he caused trouble and was fired... He is probably spreading these rumors due to that."

"That's right, it's absurd. The mayor selling citizens? It isn't funny." Alsein's voice was ferocious. Enyanis said, "However, there are rumors that Elsanad ran away from him. The fact that she didn't deny his claim on the spot has left the citizens shaken."

"....."

"You should've been there. Why did you do that?"

"That..."

Alsein sipped his tea. "Cough. That... she shouldn't have to deal with such a person. There might be problems if she responds too quickly. It obviously isn't true, but it is a betrayal for the people who believe it."

"Regardless, an explanation is needed. Not responding will make the rumor more pervasive."

"I know."

Alsein thought about it. Then he looked at Crockta. "Crockta, it is nice to meet you. You have become an honorary citizen. Enyanis told me about your excellent behavior the other day."

"It isn't a big deal."

"As a citizen who works with the mayor, I can say that the mayor absolutely isn't such a person. Of course, there are other things but... Thanks to these unusual aspects, she has done a good job. Arnin is prospering thanks to her."

"I understand."

"If you have any more questions, then I will answer them now. Is there anything else

you are curious about?"

Crockta was troubled. "Well... how about the mayor's daughter?"

He heard the other day that the mayor was worried about her daughter not listening to her.

Alsein's face hardened for a moment. But then a smile appeared on his face. "Hahaha. You are interested in her daughter."

"I am just curious."

"She is beautiful like the mayor. She wants to keep working as a guard... that is the worry but... there are no problems. She is just young."

"Yes."

"If you continue to watch, then you will see that everything is fictional. Anyways, welcome to Arnin. I need to return to the mayor."

Alsein rose from his seat. Enyanis said, "Are you going already?"

"I forgot that the mayor called me. I'll come back next time."

"Yes, thank you."

Alsein left this place with large strides. Crockta was deep in thought as he looked at Alsein's back. As the door to the drawing room closed, Enyanis sipped his tea and said in a quiet voice.

"Crockta."

"Yes."

"In fact, I have something to say to you."

"What is it...?"

Enyanis coughed. Crockta listened closely. "The Arnin Plains' Rescue Unit, inspired by Crockta, is very responsive. The reaction is explosive. So it makes sense..."

“.....”

“Can I draw a portrait of you? I’ll also create a nice invitation for you and frame it... Hanging them side by side... Hmm hmm, it will go down in Arnin’s history. I know a great painter...”

“...That’s okay.”

“Just think about it once...”

“...It’s okay.”

“Still...”



Elsanad looked up. She was in her office. Her desk and appliances were neatly arranged and all in harmony. The whole room looked like it was made for her. It was all Elsanad’s vision.

“Alsein?”

“Mayor.”

Alsein stood in front of her.

“Didn’t you get today off?” She asked.

“I have something to say to you.”

Elsanad took off the glasses that she was using to look at the documents. Her vivid green eyes stared at Alsein. “What is it?”

“There are some people who believe Ilya’s words.”

“.....”

“The election is upcoming. It would be better to take care of this at once.”

Elsanad nodded. “If Alsein says so. Ilya still seems to have some complaints against

me. I will personally explain it to the citizens. I'll ask Ilya about the rumors that are stirring up the citizens."

"Yes."

"Do you have anything else to say?"

"And..."

"And?"

"It is about Elwina."

Elsanad cocked her head. "Elwina?"

"Yes. Hasn't Ilya started acting? It might be dangerous for Elwina to go around like this."

"She is careful."

"Mayor."

"I understand. I'll tell her. I'll explain it to her properly"

"Thank you." Alsein nodded and bowed.

"Then let's go."

"Huh? Where...?"

"Didn't Alsein say it just now?" Elsanad got up from her desk and wore the coat that was hanging on the wall. The cloth was the colour of the sky, making her white skin shine. Elsanad dressed up and smiled at Alsein. The whole room seemed to light up from her beautiful smile.

"I'm going to see the citizens."

"Now?"

"Of course."

Elsanad passed by Alsein. “It won’t be beautiful if they keep on talking. I need to get rid of it quickly.”

“I understand.”

Alsein nodded.

Due to Elsanad’s beautiful appearance, people often thought that she was gentle or weak. But she absolutely wasn’t. Rather, it was close to the opposite.

Elsanad was strong. She had difficult standards. The things that didn’t meet those standards would be thoroughly excluded. She didn’t care about contrary opinions. She just wanted to accomplish what she desired. In that sense, she was closer to being heartless than being gentle.

Her beautiful appearance and attitude didn’t reveal her essence. It was fortunate that her dream was Arnin’s prosperity.

After thinking this, Alsein spoke to Elsanad, “I’ll prepare the carriage. Where are you going?”

“The square. Everyone should be there. Prepare a podium.”

“I understand. I will let the citizens know.

“Please.”

Elsanad, Alsein, and her attendants headed towards Arnin’s central square. Crockta and Ilya were also there.

# **CHAPTER 38**

## **TRUTH (2)**

---

Elsanad bowed to the citizens, her voice filled with sincerity.

She explained about the allegations. She wanted to increase the number of facilities in the slums, and had contracted those cursed by the stars at a cheap price in order to solve the budget problem. She admitted that there was some trouble in the meantime.

“Citizens, I have only been working for Arnin. I believe that all of the citizens here knows my heart. I didn’t think they would commit such evil things. It is my fault. I will bow down and apologize.”

They nodded.

The elves that were freed from Thawing Balhae by Ilya were touched after Elsanad’s speech. As witnesses of the crimes committed, Ilya had brought them here to testify. But Elsanad’s eloquence caused their hearts to shake.

Ilya’s face gradually stiffened, and Crockta was watching all of this.

Elsanad came down from the podium and hugged all of the victims. She promised to compensate them for the damage and tearfully emphasized with the pain they suffered. She expressed her strong will to thoroughly search for the criminals.

Crockta used a skill.

[Mind’s Eye (Special) has been used.]

[The target’s level is higher than the caster. It has failed.]

He used it again.

[Mind's Eye (Special) has been used.]

[The target's level is higher than the caster. It has failed.]

.....

He used it several times, but the result was the same. Crockta frowned and concentrated.

[Mind's Eye's (Special) has opened.]

[You can feel fine but sincere emotions.]

Then Ilya drew near to shout at Elsanad. Elsanad's expression was shaken and she protested. As her emotions grew, Crockta was able to grasp a little bit of her heart through Mind's Eye.

"How do you explain this ledger? Elsanad! This is the physical evidence!"

"I don't know. The contents might have been manipulated. I would never do this."

"There is no criminal who would admit to their sins."

Ilya raised the book up high. "This details how much they sold the poor elves for, and how much money they gave to the mayor in return. Citizens, don't be fooled by Elsanad's slick tongue. This woman is a demon who sold her own citizens."

The citizens started murmuring again.

Crockta used a skill.

[Mind's Eye (Special) has been used.]

[The level of the target is higher than the caster, but his frenzied emotions are emanating from him.]

[Feelings of deceit can be felt.]

Elsanad's emotions were heartfelt. Feelings of deception could be felt from Ilya. For Crockta, it was clear what the truth was.

"I couldn't save all of the elves that were sold. I can't leave this city to such a suspicious woman. Citizens! Please find out! Here is the proof!"

"Ilya, calm down. Everybody, he is spreading rumors to tarnish my honour."

"Then bring proof that this evidence is false, Elsanad!"

The citizens were once again confused. In the end, the two campaigns failed to come to a conclusion.

As Arnin's election approached, both of them were being talked about by the citizens. Those who believed in Ilya and those who believed in Elsanad hit the streets. Others believed that Elsanad wasn't guilty, but she should take responsibility for neglecting this incident.

Arnin was in a state of confusion.

Crockta went and visited Ilya.

"Ilya."

"Crockta, did something happen?"

Ilya was scratching his head while writing, like something wasn't going well. He raised his head at Crockta's appearance.

Ilya's mansion was very luxurious. He was clearly a wealthy person, and it seemed that he was funding his own political activities. It was impossible for someone with an

economic crisis to plan such a thing.

"I have to ask you something."

"What is it?"

"I'll just speak bluntly."

Crockta closed the door. "Did you doctor that ledger?"

Ilya's expression changed. He pulled out the ledger, an old, leather-bound book, from the drawer under his desk. He opened the book, revealing the many transactions written inside.

"Manipulated... Elsanad said that."

Ilya laughed. He stared at Crockta for a moment. Crockta looked back without any hesitation. Ilya's eyes shook. His expression was calm, but feelings of irritation and anger filled his eyes.

Ilya threw the book. It flew and landed at Crockta's feet. Then he said,

"Whether it is manipulated or not."

Ilya pulled out another book from his drawer. It looked exactly the same as the previous book. The same contents were also written inside. Ilya chuckled and threw it at Crockta's feet.

"Does it have anything to do with you?"

"....."

"You made a deal with Derek, just like me. You just have to do your assignment. Stop doing such useless things, Crockta."

A few more similar books were pulled out of Ilya's desk. Ilya laughed as he looked at them. "Anyway, you came here for revenge against the Thawing Balhae Clan due to the orc called Lenox."

Crockta's expression changed at the mention of Lenox's name.

Ilya continued, “Derek’s warning for me was true. He did say that orcs were righteous. I told him I would handle it.”

“Did you deceive me?”

“It wasn’t deception, but proper cooperation. Didn’t you catch those guys, thanks to me? Can you continue to catch those cursed by the stars without me? Can you handle the tiring work while watching your own life, without my help?”

“.....”

“We each did what we needed to do, that’s it.”

Ilya got up from his seat. His beautiful face, which had always been smiling, distorted. This caused a word that didn’t suit the elves to appear in Crockta’s mind.

Ugly. His true face was ugly.

“Yes, I will tell you everything. I sold the elves together with the people from Thawing Balhae. I had a deal with them.”

“.....!”

“And I got tired of them. I had drained just enough from them. Those cursed by the stars, did they really think I would deal with them forever? Thank you for your help.” He spread his arms and laughed. “Anyway, I will become Arnin’s next mayor. That’s it. You can leave quietly.”

“Ugly.”

“Everyone is like this if you dig deeply enough. I’m just being honest.”

Ilya approached Crockta. Crockta didn’t move. The faint shape of an elemental was around Ilya’s body. The appearance of the elemental was distorted like Ilya.

“If you want to reveal anything then do so, Orc Warrior. Then I, along with Derek, won’t help you anymore. I wonder if the citizens will trust the word of an orc. Why don’t you just worry about your revenge? Otherwise it will be a waste.”

Ilya raised his hand. The door behind Crockta was opened using magic power.

“Crockta, I quite like you.”

“I don’t like you.”

“Our motivations are different, but we are similar when it comes to moving forward towards our purpose. In fact, I actually like justice. Isn’t it good? Justice and judgement. However, I don’t want them shoved towards me.”

Ilya waved his hand. “Well, bye.”

It was a command to leave.

Crockta looked at Ilya’s face. It was a familiar smile. As he nodded and turned around, Crockta thought about his own actions.



Alsein entered Elsanad’s residence. It was beautiful, but at the same time, he couldn’t erase the feeling of desolation.

Everything was well maintained and kept the same. The garden was always kept in the same shape that never changed, even with the passing seasons. Gardeners watched the landscape with bated breath each and every day.

Inside the mansion. He bumped into an elf maid. She flinched and hurriedly moved, entering an open room and not leaving until Alsein passed by. Alsein was familiar with this place, so he kept moving.

He arrived at the drawing room and saw that refreshments were already prepared. However, there were no signs of the people who prepared it. It was like he was alone in the mansion.

Those who worked in Elsanad’s mansion were never allowed to show themselves. They had to work for Elsanad’s convenience in inconspicuous ways. It was the same whether they were gardeners, maids, or cooks.

They obviously existed somewhere, but Alsein couldn’t see them. That was Elsanad’s mansion. This was because someone coming and going while working would disturb the beauty of the mansion. It was a standard close to perfection that others couldn’t understand.

Elsanad was the one who made it happen.

Alsein sipped his tea. Elsanad couldn't be seen. She wasn't in the mansion right now. Suddenly, a familiar face appeared.

Elwina.

"Young Lady."

"Alsein, what happened?"

She seemed to be in a good mood. Her smiling face resembled Elsanad. She moved like she had done something good like a child who had received a Christmas present. It was a beautiful sight for anyone to see.

But Alsein's face hardened as he saw her.

"Young Lady."

"Huh?"

"Perhaps..."

Alsein put down his cup of tea. "... It's nothing."

"Why? What is it?"

Alsein touched the cup with his fingers and asked again. "You look good. Did you get a new doll?"

"How did you know?"

"....."

Alsein rose from his seat and approached Elwina. Her green eyes that resembled Elsanad's looked up at Alsein.

"What did I tell you?" Alsein caught her shoulder. "You shouldn't do this hobby."

"Why can't I do what I want?"

“The daughter of Arnin’s mayor...”

“Are you angry right now?”

Elwina pouted. Her pink lips looked dirty, and Alsein turned his head like he couldn’t speak anymore.

“I should be going back. Tell the mayor to come and meet me tomorrow.”

Elwina smiled, but Alsein immediately turned his body around. He quickly left the mansion.

Elwina’s face appeared in his head. Elwina’s face gradually shifted to Elsanad’s face. He shook his head. Ilya’s voice shouting in the square entered his head. Alsein tried to get rid of it again. He felt dizzy and stopped in the middle of the street.

Looking around, he spotted a familiar shape. It wasn’t a common appearance in Arnin. The person gradually approached.

“Alsein.”

It was the orc Crockta.

“...Crockta, what a coincidence.”

Crockta shook his head. “No. I was looking for you.”

He smiled. The orc’s smile was strange, but Alsein couldn’t think it was terrible after being told about Crockta by Enyanis. He didn’t know about all orc warriors, but this one was a man who deserved to be an honorary citizen.

Crockta asked,

“Would you like a drink?”

Alsein was surprised by the sudden offer.

“Drink.”

A drink.

It had been a long time since he last drank alcohol, but it didn't seem to be too bad of an idea right now. Elwina's face was sitting heavily in his head, so he could wash it away with strong alcohol. He wanted to get rid of the faces of Elsanad, Elwina, and Ilya that were making him sick.

Crockta was a stranger, but he seemed more reliable than anyone else Alsein knew. The usual Alsein would've never done something like this. But right now, he wanted to do it.

They entered a small pub nearby. The elves stared at Crockta the orc, but soon went back to their own affairs. The two people sat down in the corner. Elves generally drank fruit wine that had a fairly high alcohol content.

"You came to find me?"

"Yes." Crockta drank the alcohol. The elven cups seemed small to him. "Let me talk for a bit. Do you know the reason why I came here?"

"Well, I'm curious."

The two raised their glasses.

Crockta started talking about his past.

Lenox's work, the man who betrayed him, the attack of the humans, and Crockta's revenge. Crockta told a brief story, but it was enough to show what type of orc he was. As a warrior, he set out for vengeance against the humans who killed his teacher.

As the story continued, the number of bottles in front of both of them increased. Alsein wasn't a strong drinker. His eyes gazed into the distance as he put down his cup. His eyes shone as he started swaying and asked.

"...Why are you telling this story?"

Crockta talked about his past, the reason why he came here and about Ilya. The ledger was false and Ilya was the one who had done all the bad things.

"Then won't your revenge go to waste?"

It was important for Crockta to get rid of the Thawing Balhae Clan, but he could lose

that chance for revenge if he told the truth.

“Don’t you already know?”

Crockta laughed.

Alsein silently drank the alcohol again. Those words. It was a question that didn’t need an answer.

There was no reason to tell a lie. However, the truth was a heavy burden on Alsein. The reason for not revealing the truth was due to the people who hid it.

Alsein gazed at Crockta.

A dreadful face, a muscled body, some fierce tattoos, and a fearsome greatsword on his back. He was a strong warrior. If Crockta was self-interested, then this could backfire. But Alsein wasn’t worried at all. For the first time in ages, he could trust someone.

“Crockta.”

“Yes.”

“Are you alive?”

Crockta laughed. Alsein had been deeply troubled after hearing Crockta talk about Lenox’s death and his final teachings. Then he asked himself: Was he truly alive? Or was he merely breathing? He couldn’t respond, so he wanted to hear Crockta’s answer.

Crockta opened his mouth, “Of course I am alive.”

“How come?”

Crockta took a sip of the alcohol and laughed. “I am breathing right now. Kung kung kung!”

“I see. Huhu.”

“Kulkulkul!”

Crockta and Alsein both burst out laughing. The laughter stopped and Alsein nodded. He stared at the little bit of alcohol left in his cup and thought about something. Alsein looked at a distant place and said, "Crockta."

"Yes."

"Enyanis asked me, 'When Ilya first started the accusations, why did the mayor leave, instead of responding straight away?'"

"That's right."

"Since you have told me the truth, I will tell you the truth."

"Huh?"

"I am drunk, so listen carefully before I regret it."

"What...?"

"At the time, I thought it would be enough."

Crockta closed his mouth. Alsein stated, "Crockta."

"Yes."

Alsein drank the alcohol remaining in the cup. He stared at Crockta with eyes that seemed completely sober.

"Go to the basement in Mayor Elsanad's home."

After his words, Alsein lost consciousness and his head dropped down.

# **CHAPTER 39**

## **HONORARY CITIZEN**

---

Under the cover of night, Crockta crossed the wall. Mayor Elsanad's mansion was quiet. He walked past the garden and up to the front door. He turned the doorknob, opening the door. A deep darkness blanketed the inside.

Crockta stepped forward. His footsteps echoed thanks to the structure of the mansion. His eyes scanned the darkness. The mansion, which was beautiful under the sun, looked creepy in the darkness.

*Chobeok. Chobeok.*

He crossed the corridor while looking in the rooms. None of the doors were locked. He passed by the deserted ones. Then suddenly, Crockta saw a shape looking at him in the darkness.

“.....!”

It was a statue. The faint moonlight shining through the windows gave him a glimpse of the outline. It was a statue of an elf staring into the air.

Crockta reached out to it. The texture of cold plaster could be felt. The physical shape looked real, and it seemed like it would move in the darkness.

Crockta slowly turned his gaze to the side. The elf statue was guarding something. The door was firmly closed. He grabbed the handle, but the door didn't open. It was the only locked place that he had discovered in Elsanad's mansion.

Crockta looked around. It was dark but his eyes could see the shape of everything. Nothing moved. There were no indications of any people. It was eerie. Crockta gave strength to his hand. He gripped the doorknob tightly. It gradually creaked until it fell off with a low sound. Pieces of the door fell off.

The door opened. Crockta entered. Then he flinched once again. In the large room, there were several statues similar to the one at the entrance. They looked so alive that he almost swung his greatsword at them.

Crockta explored inside. In addition to the statues, paintings were hung on the walls. The paintings were expensive pieces of artwork signed by the artist. It was a room where Elsanad's aesthetics could be felt.

Crockta wandered through the room and paused in front of a painting. It was crude compared to the other paintings. However, it was the signed name below that made him stop.

Elwina. Elsanad's daughter.

It was a crude work with a human and elf standing side by side. Elwina had tried to draw every detail, despite her lack of skills. It was a painting drawn by a person with a high interest in the human body.

Crockta looked at it for a while before lifting the painting from the wall. He found it. There was a recess in the wall where the painting was hanging, with a button inside.

Crockta pressed it. The floor started to tremble slightly. Crockta turned his head towards the sound. The bottom of the floor was slowly opening. Slowly, stairs leading downwards were revealed. They were stairs heading to the basement.

Alsein's voice telling him to visit Elsanad's basement popped into Crockta's head.

It was here. Crockta took one step. It was a small passage for him. One step, two steps, his footsteps echoed as he descended.

He headed downwards for a while before reaching the end of the stairs. There was a door. Something was beyond it. Crockta remembered Alsein's eyes. His eyes had been shaking. What did he know? What was he troubled over?

Crockta opened the door. Then he took one step.

".....!"

A chill went down his spine. There were the dark shadows of dozens of people who were looking at Crockta in the darkness.

He lowered the hand that had moved to the handle of his greatsword. His fingers shook. They didn't move.

Inside the basement there were people staring blankly at the air, not at Crockta. Crockta's heart sank as he saw their faces.

The face of Elwina, who greeted visitors at the entrance of Arnin, popped into his head. He later found out that she was Elsanad's daughter. He thought that she was just a spoiled person. But that wasn't it.

In fact, she had a world of her own that she couldn't communicate with others. It was a world that could never be tolerated.

Crockta reached for a nearby elf. He felt soft skin, but it was cool and didn't feel alive.

'Is this why she's so obsessed with working as a guard?'

Alsein had said this in passing and Crockta now realized what he meant. She chose victims that no one would care about if they died. No one would know where and how they had disappeared. Visitors disappeared in droves after visiting Arnin.

Elwina's goal was those visitors. Crockta was no exception.

"It is a tragedy."

Crockta muttered. His head dropped as he was surrounded by dozens of stuffed victims.

All of them were beautiful. A face with beautiful proportions. Dark blue eyes. Unusual hair color or pinkish red lips. The slender legs, elegant shoulders, and long, delicate necks made them victims.

Elwina had stuffed them to maintain their beauty and to keep them forever in her collection. It was a horrible tragedy.

Crockta closed his eyes.

Their sins weighed heavily on him. Arnin was a beautiful city, but it was an abode where numerous beasts with human faces were tangled together.

A demon sold his people for wealth and power, deceiving his victims with a smile. The other demon, who stuffed the visitors of the city, strolled among the citizens under the protection of her mother.

All of the citizens believed in and followed them. It was a terrible mess of deception and evil. There was no truth anywhere.

Crockta's hand clenched into a fist, his body starting to uncontrollably shake. The stuffed truths were staring at Crockta. He raised his eyes. His eyes met those of an elf child. The little elf child was smiling. That smile was stopped forever.

Crockta sighed.

Lenox. His face popped into Crockta's head.

'What would you do?

'Would you have an answer for this tragedy?'

Lenox looked at him and smiled. He slowly opened his mouth. Lenox's voice echoed. He only said one word to Crockta, but it was enough.

There was always only one answer.

Crockta nodded.

Bul'tar.



The sun shone in the sky.

Ilya and Mayor Elsanad met again in the square to debate over the controversial issue and to determine who the next mayor would be. The two mayor candidates. Elsanad and Ilya. Depending on the outcome of this debate, the future of Arnin would be decided.

"Elsanad, changing the topic is meaningless. You are the culprit. There is clear evidence with this book, yet you would deny your sins until the end?"

"I can't say anything. It is a fake book, anyone could make that. I could also forge a book and claim that you were behind it."

"Do you admit that you would handle things that way? Did you run the city like this?

Through forgery and deceit?"

"You use cowardly means. Don't change the topic. Right now, what you are doing is deception."

The conversation was going nowhere. Elsanad countered calmly, but Ilya was excellent at stirring up the citizens. The crowd split in half and cheered for the politician they were supporting. Arnin guards were around the stage in case of an emergency.

Ilya and Elsanad continued the debate on the stage.

Now no one was concerned about the victims. The story of the elves being trafficked had been forgotten, and the voices of the victims vanished without a trace as no one in Arnin cared for such things.

One orc ran across the square.

"W-What?"

The man who was bumped into turned his head away as he met the orc's fierce gaze. The orc had a determined expression on his face. His greatsword was on his shoulder as he walked towards Elsanad and Ilya.

"Entry isn't permitted."

The guards around the stage blocked him. The orc didn't go any further. He stood there and looked at the two politicians. Ilya suddenly noticed his presence and turned his head towards the orc. However, he didn't care about the orc, and kept criticizing Elsanad. Elsanad's eyes darkened.

There was no guilt in them. The orc confirmed this fact and turned towards the citizens. He saw the faces of the citizens. Interest, tension excitement etc., all types of emotions were swirling.

However, there wasn't what he needed most. It was anger. No one was truly angry.

The orc felt anger fill his chest as he shouted.

"Everyone——!"

The orc's voice rang out in the square.

"Quiet———!"

An intense cry that shook the eardrums of the listeners. The shouting of an orc warrior, which hadn't been heard for a long time in Arnin, shook Arnin Square.

".....!"

A sobering voice! The square became quiet in an instant. Everyone looked at the orc who was the epicentre of the sound. The guards didn't know what to do and just watched him. Ilya and Elsanad, who were making claims on the stage, also quieted down.

All the eyes and ears in the square were focused on the orc. The orc lifted something up. A crystal ball was in his thick hands.

Ilya's face turned pale.

"Now."

Crockta declared. Then a human came forward.

It was a human magician, Puri. He had been helped by Crockta on the plains along with Gilliam, so he was now paying back the favor. Puri raised a hand, his magic power wrapping around the crystal ball.

The crystal ball started shining. In the air, a giant video appeared. It was the memory playback magic that could play videos in the crystal ball! It was an expensive item, and the magic required to activate it was difficult. The citizens paid attention to it.

The video that appeared was stabilized. Someone's face appeared. It was Ilya, his face floating in the air. He moved within the crystal ball and spoke. His remarks were reproduced.

*-.... Yes, I will tell you everything. I sold the elves together with the people from Thawing Balhae. I had a deal with them.*

Ilya jumped up.

*-... And I got tired of them. I had drained just enough from them. Those cursed by the stars, did they really think I would deal with them forever? Thank you for your help.*

The citizens started murmuring again. The truth that they were arguing over had finally been revealed. Ilya's ugly remarks followed.

*-... Anyway, I will become Arnin's next mayor. That's it. You can leave quietly.*

The eyes of the citizens turned towards Ilya in unison. His face distorted and Elsanad's face brightened. She didn't know who the orc was, but he had given evidence of her innocence. She used this momentum.

A complacent expression appeared on her face.

"Citizens! Have you seen everything? This man tried to discredit me and fool the citizens!" She raised her fist. "As the mayor of Arnin and a citizen, I will make a formal accusation against the coward Ilya!"

Then she shouted to one of the Arnin guards.

"Guard, take him to jail right now!"

The citizens alternated looking between Elsanad, Ilya, and the orc. They were confused due to the sudden situation. However, the citizens soon responded to Elsanad's words.

"That guy!"

"Ilya was the culprit!"

"The mayor is innocent!"

But the video didn't end there. The screen jumped and this time a white mansion at night appeared.

It was a building that every citizen in Arnin knew. The mansion was one of the most beautiful buildings in Arnin. Elsanad's home.

The citizens stopped again.

“.....?”

The video moved gradually as it followed the eyes of the filer.

Over the wall and once inside, the person arrived at a room filled with statues and paintings. Elsanad's mansion continued to be shown. The citizens looked at the screen with confusion over what they were seeing.

Elsanad's face stiffened as she saw it.

“Stop that right now!”

She tried to run off the stage. But Ilya grabbed Elsanad's wrist. He sensed something in her reaction.

On the video, the secret door to the basement opened. The video started going down.

Elsanad shouted, “Guards! Stop that orc! Stop him!”

But the video continued without stopping.

“.....!”

The terrible truth was revealed. The citizens were surprised to see the elves and humans inside the room, and were shocked as they understood what it meant. It was a terrible scene that they had never imagined.

The owner of the video gazed at the stuffed animals for a while. On the screen, the faces of the elves, humans, and a smiling child could be seen. The screen moved along with his eyes. At first glance, there were more than 20 stuffed people. Everyone looked alive and motionless, like they were still breathing.

There were citizens who stumbled at the scene. The truth was harsh. This demon, who was a serial killer, was the leader of the city. The gaze of the person filming moved downwards.

He looked at his feet. The screen displayed the floor. The murmur of the person filming resonated in the ears of the citizens.

*-It is a tragedy.*

It was a calm voice. Then the screen showing the floor cut off.

The crystal ball finished its role and broke into pieces. The video ended, but nobody moved.

Silence. Everyone in the square had stopped moving. In that stillness, the orc alone moved.

He turned around. He gazed towards Ilya and Elsanard, the two demons, and said.

“Ilya and Elsanad.”

They didn’t move.

“With the evidence I just presented, I accuse you.”

The stunned guards recovered their spirits. They looked at each other and then started walking towards Ilya and Elsanad. Now they were horrible criminals.

Elsanad exclaimed, “Don’t make me laugh! This is all fabricated! You might have a pass to enter Arnin, but you aren’t a citizen! Not even a citizen, yet a dirty orc dares accuse me? Impossible!”

It was her last-ditch effort.

“On the subject of the orc! Who the hell are you listening to? Guards, do you believe an orc over your mayor? Someone who isn’t even a citizen?”

It was Elsanad’s futile struggle to delay her downfall. Even Ilya stared at Elsanad with disgust in his eyes. But Elsanad was the mayor. The guards stopped moving the moment they heard her cry. Then they looked at the orc accusing her.

All eyes fell on the orc once again. But he had a cold expression on his face.

The orc opened his mouth, “Listen up, Elsanad.”

The orc spoke in a distinctively thick and low voice. “I am someone who is equal to the citizens of Arnin.”

His voice rang out through the square.

"All rights enjoyed by the citizens of Arnin are equally applied to me. It is a legitimate right granted for the dedication and merits I have contributed to Arnin, one that nobody can withdraw unless I commit an offense that undermines Arnin's justice."

He pulled something out. His evidence sparkled under the sun. Everyone's gaze turned to the proof of identity.

The orc declared, "I am Crockta, the one given an honorary citizenship by Enyanis, the plains administrator"

# **CHAPTER 40**

## **CHESSWOOD (1)**

---

“What will you do?” asked Jeremy, Derek’s subordinate.

Derek had invested in Ilya betting on Elsanad’s downfall, but the results had turned in an unexpected direction. Crockta had accused both Ilya and Elsanad.

“Wait a minute.”

Derek was writing at his desk in his office. Jeremy waited. Derek wrote something for a while before putting down his pen.

“I wish you luck... Let’s pray that the Ashira flowers will bloom soon... Which one is okay?”

Jeremy’s eyes widened. It was because there was a smile in Derek’s voice.

“I think both are good.”

“If you think it is bad, then you can tell me.”

Jeremy nodded and asked Derek a question. “Is the person a man or a woman?”

“A man.”

“Then the former would be better.”

“But he is an elf.”

“Then I will recommend the latter.”

“You are very prejudiced about gender and species.”

Derek laughed and picked up his pen again. The sentence about the flowers blooming was derived from an epic poem. The Ashira flowers decorating a garland meant a march of victory. It was meant to express good luck, but in a less dry manner.

"Do you know how long it has been since I had to write a letter to fix an unexpected problem?"

"I've never seen it happen."

"Yes. It was so long ago that I don't even remember it."

Derek placed the letter in an envelope and sealed it with candle wax and handed it to Jeremy. "Very interesting."

"Is this as you expected?"

"Jeremy, victory is only worth it if you meet a difficult and unexpected problem, and manage to jump over it."

Jeremy was told to deliver a letter. The recipient was a name that he didn't know.

"Who is it?"

"Who? My new puppet."

Derek laughed. "Our orc warrior has upset Arnin, so now I need someone to fix it."

"Then..."

"The bad guys have been cleansed. However, new villains always appear in the world."

Jeremy nodded. This was why he followed Derek. Jeremy had never seen any gaps in Derek. He responded as if everything was as expected, and produced results according to his own will.

It was also true for his incident. Crockta did things in a way that they hadn't expected. Ilya, whom they had invested in, was now a criminal and would be held in Arnin's dungeon. Derek had said that this was unexpected, but Jeremy didn't think so. Derek had plenty of precautions for just in case.

In the larger picture, Derek still controlled everything according to his will.

"Also, pass on the following information to Crockta."

“Even though he broke the contract?”

“In a way, I was in the wrong.”

Crockta had placed a condition in the contract. He wouldn’t do anything that would go against a warrior’s honor.

“I didn’t know that Ilya and Elsanad were such villains, so I suppose it was to be expected that Crockta would be so willful.”

“I understand.”

“Please. This time, I hope that you will help Crockta a bit.”

Jeremy read the letter recipient’s name again and nodded. The recipient was the Arnin Plains administrator, Enyanis.

Now that Ilya and Elsanad had fallen, Arnin would need a new mayor. It didn’t matter who they were. As long as he accepted Derek’s help, he would become the new mayor of Arnin. The citizens would be enthusiastic about him without knowing his deceit. This was the world that Jeremy saw.



The two politicians turned out to be criminals. There was a city wide outrage. They desired a new beginning. As there was a lot of excitement for a fresh start, new politicians appeared in Arnin and spoke about clearing up the ugly past.

The name of the honorary citizen Crockta also filled the city. However, the orc didn’t want the attention and didn’t appear in front of the people. There was a huge response for Enyanis, the elf who appointed him as the honorary citizen.

A statue of the honorary citizen was erected in Arnin Square. It was of an orc, not an elf, nor a human.

They didn’t write his name in respect for his will, but all of the citizens of Arnin knew who the honorary citizen was. It was an expression of the citizen’s wish for an ‘honorary citizen’ to appear again whenever Arnin was corrupted.

“I’m tired.”

Crockta hid his body because of his popularity. A hood covered his face, but it couldn't hide the orc's unique size, so he refrained from going out as much as possible.

"It is because you are the only orc in Arnin," Enyanis said.

"Are you really leaving?"

"I have something to do."

"Too bad. It would be nice if you could've stayed longer."

Derek had unexpectedly given Crockta information about the next destination. Crockta became aware of another Thawing Balhae base. The name of the destination was Chesswood.

This time, Derek didn't ask for anything. Derek's messenger said that Crockta could do what he wanted. It was hard for Crockta to guess Derek's intentions, but he chose not to think too deeply. He would do what he needed to do.

"This was the first place I saw you."

Crockta and Enyanis were standing on the Arnin Plains where they first met. Enyanis nodded. He looked at the rock that Crockta left behind. 'A warrior doesn't attack unarmed people.' The thrill Enyanis felt at that time was still vivid in his mind.

The orc in front of him was the type of person that he had never met before. Many people spoke about justice with their mouths, but it was the first time he saw someone act directly on their words. He was looking forward to the orc's actions in the future.

"Where are you going?"

"Chesswood."

"Chesswood..."

It is the land of humans.

And the word that best suited it was 'pandemonium.' A cursed place. But if it was this orc, it might turn out well.

"Good luck. I hope that every step you take is filled with Ashira flowers."

"Thank you."

Crockta didn't know what it implied, but it sounded good. Suddenly, a yell was heard from those hunting the triters on the plains.

"Wahh! Help me!"

A man was running away from a triter, but Crockta wasn't the one who moved. Suddenly, dozens of arrows flew through the air and pierced the triter. It was the skill of the user Yurin, who had joined the Arnin Plain's Rescue Unit after Crockta. She winked as she noticed Crockta's gaze. Crockta nodded.

In addition to Yurin, other NPCs and users were wearing the red rescue vest that symbolized the Arnin Plains' Rescue Unit. Those who didn't have the ability relied on the rescue unit to help them out with the triters. The Arnin Plains were filled with a lot of warmth.

"This is your heritage."

The number of people who died hunting the triters greatly decreased. Crockta had made a contribution as the honorary citizen, alleviating the criticism towards other species.

"Well, let's live and see each other again."

It was time to leave. Crockta extended his fist in the orc manner. Enyanis also extended his fist. The orc greeting was strange, but he could feel something. Something seemed to rise in him as his fist met the orc's hard skin.

The two people firmly bumped fists.

Crockta turned around. The large orc moved away from Arnin. It was calm after the great orc left.

"Phew."

Somebody approached Enyanis, who had been staring blankly. It was Jeremy, who had been sent by Derek. Jeremy whistled as he stood beside Enyanis.

"Phew. That orc is truly frightening."

Enyanis stared at him. Jeremy turned around. Both of them had already talked to each other. Jeremy asked, "Anyway, have you made up your mind?"

"You will definitely keep the promise?"

"Of course. We'll help you."

"I didn't know a mere money lender would have so much money."

"Watch your mouth. Derek is more than that."

Enyanis nodded. "Okay."

"It's a deal."

"But keep this in mind. I might receive political funds from you, but I won't do anything unjust."

"We'll soon see."

Jeremy grinned. Everyone was like that at first. "Then other people will come and talk to you about the rest. I have to go."

"Are you going with Crockta?"

"He doesn't need to know."

Jeremy looked in the direction that Crockta went. Derek said it was fine, but Jeremy was unsure. He would keep a close eye on the orc.



Ian disconnected.

He checked his watch and saw that he had been playing for a long time. The strange thing was that he didn't feel dizzy or tired at all. His body was refreshed, like he had a good night's sleep.

He looked back on the previous game play. He was immersed, like he really was Crockta. The things that happened in the place called Arnin truly made him furious.

Thanks to Arnin, his achievement points had gone up tremendously. Despite accusing a high ranking NPC like the mayor, he seemed to have been praised for his influence in the world of Elder Lord. As his achievement points rose, his level also increased.

Now there weren't a lot of people playing Elder Lord who could ignore him.

He went out to the living room and turned on the TV. [Elder Lord News] was playing, a program that briefly told news about the world of Elder Lord. There was also news about Arnin's mayor replacement. The details weren't revealed, but it mentioned that Arnin's mayor and mayor candidate were arrested after the accusation of a citizen.

"Umm..."

He checked his phone and saw that it was the busy time at the café. He had left Han Yeori in charge. An image of her looking at him resentfully appeared in his head. He needed to pay a bit of attention to her.

Ian left his house and drove to the café. After parking the car and entering the café, he heard the greeting of the new part-timer, Yoo Sooyeon.

"Welcome! This is Café Reason."

It was a cheerful voice that brightened up the listener's mood. Ian nodded. Han Yeori had taught her well. Han Yeori confirmed Ian's appearance and said, "It's the boss."

".....!"

There was something strange. Yoo Sooyeon's expression sank as she heard Han Yeori's words. It felt like she had lost all sense of animation. It was a subtle distinction, but Ian could clearly feel it. Han Yeori looked at Ian and nodded towards a corner.

Ian turned towards where she was indicating.

".....!"

Ian was surprised again. A familiar woman was elegantly sitting down with her legs crossed while also drinking a cup of coffee.

She was Ji Hayeon, the heir to the Myeongsong Group. She had already seen Ian and was smiling at him. The men in suits that Ian had seen outside the café were because of her.

Ian approached. Ji Hayeon spoke first. “Have you been busy these days?”

“I think Hayeon-ssi is busier than me.”

“That’s right. I’m busy, but I made some time.”

She took a sip of coffee. It was like a scene from a movie.

“Ian-ssi, do you want some coffee? Or are you tired of it, after owning a café?”

“Not really.”

“Have you eaten?”

There were a lot of questions. Ian smiled and shook his head. “No.”

“Then do you want to go and have dinner together? I’ll buy it for you.”

Ian shook his head again. Ji Hayeon’s expression became sulky. “I’m sorry, I’m going to eat dinner with someone else later.”

“Who?”

He looked at Han Yeori instead of answering. She was making a drink for a customer. She seemed listless, so he was going to buy her delicious food.

“Is it like that between you two?”

“It’s just a boss and employee relationship.”

“Hrm...”

She looked at Ian like she was suspicious. Ian just shrugged. The conversation between the two broke off. Ji Hayeon seemed to be thinking about something as she hesitated before opening her mouth.

“Do you play Elder Lord?”

Ian looked at her.

Recently, he discovered that Elder Saga Corporation was an affiliate of the Myeongsong Group. Therefore, he didn't feel like her question was strange.

“Yes.”

“I see.”

“What about Hayeon-ssi?”

“I don't. Um... maybe Ian-ssi shouldn't play it either.”

She could be called a shareholder of Elder Lord. Ian cocked his head. “Is there a problem?”

“Nothing, just...”

Her voice trailed off.

Ji Hayeon's father, Ji Eunchul, didn't allow his family to play Elder Lord.

It was due to safety. It was a secret that Elder Lord's core system wasn't properly controlled. Even though the user protection system on the capsules guaranteed the safety of the users, Ji Eunchul had strictly forbidden any shareholders from playing it.

It was a matter that involved the reputation of the Myeongsong Group, so the company was using every means possible to find Yoo Jaehan, the only man who could solve it. However, he was nowhere to be found.

Ji Hayeon couldn't explain that to Ian, so she laughed it off as a joke.

“Don't people turn violent after playing games? Huhu.”

She glanced somewhere else. One of her bodyguards outside the café was pointing to his watch. It was almost time for her next appointment. She wanted to cancel it for dinner with Ian, but it seemed like today wouldn't work. She sighed. “I was rejected today. Do you dislike me?”

“That’s impossible.”

Ian laughed. “I’ll have dinner with you next time.”

“Okay, it’s a promise. How about the day after tomorrow?”

“Okay.”

“It’s a promise.”

Ji Hayeon rose from his seat. “Then, I’ll see you the day after tomorrow.”

“Yes.”

She left the café with her unique and elegant gestures.

Ian headed to the counter after seeing her off. Yoo Sooyeon greeted Ian. She had been helped by Ian, and had become noticeably brighter ever since she started the part-time job. Han Yeori glanced at Ian.

“Boss-nim, what do you want? An espresso?”

It was a sullen voice. Ian laughed. “Yeori.”

“Yes.”

“Let’s close up early today, and come have a good meal with me.”

“Omo, really?”

Her expression changed in an instant.

“Yes.”

“Ah, didn’t you have an appointment with her?”

“No.”

“Can I eat something expensive?”

“Yes.”

Han Yeori nodded. The café’s automatic door opened and some customers entered. Han Yeori greeted them quickly.

“Welcome. This is Café Reason.”

She once again returned to her normal animated self. Ian started laughing.

# **CHAPTER 41**

## **CHESSWOOD (2)**

---

Crockta didn't like the sound of footsteps behind him. He stopped and looked back.

"Why do you keep following me?"

But the other person didn't feel intimidated. "We're just going the same way, so don't flatter yourself. Did you rent this road? How much did you pay to rent it?"

"....."

It was Derek's subordinate, Jeremy. He had caught up as Crockta left Arnin, and headed northeast to Chesswood.

"Good, renting is comfortable. Renter, renter, renter, renter... ick." Jeremy smiled at Crockta's fierce glare. "You are scary. Relax, Brother"

"....."

Crockta decided to ignore him. He started moving again.

Jeremy whistled from behind him. Jeremy's whistling was very clear and high. At first, Crockta thought it was a flute sound. There was a time when he admired it, but now that whistling didn't sound very pleasant.

Jeremy's whistle rang throughout the plains.

Thus, they continued their awkward companionship.

As the name suggested, the Chesswood area that they were heading to had small human villages scattered about in a checkered pattern. Chesswood wasn't a big city like Arnin was, but a cluster of various small villages gathered together with their own system.

What was the Thawing Balhae Clan doing there? Would he be able to find Grom's new character, the traitor called Hyunchul, and get revenge?

The future was unknown, so he had to do the best that he could right now. Crockta decided to just go there for now.

As they headed further east from Arnin, the forest disappeared, and an oft-traveled trail could be seen. If he proceeded to the center of the continent in this direction, he would be able to reach the big cities of the other species.

“Hey, Orc brother.”

“...I am called Crockta.”

“Oh. Are we already friendly enough to call each other by name? Is this Day 1 of our relationship?”

“.....”

Crockta wanted to kill him.

“What are you going to do with the cursed people in Chesswood? Are you going to use the Concrete method?”

“There is no need to know.”

“No, I’m Derek’s delegate, so I should know if you’re planning to do something strange. Our investment might fly away, after all. I need to know since our money is on the line.”

“Where did Derek invest in Chesswood?”

“Secret, a secret.”

At the end of his words, Jeremy was standing beside Crockta. Crockta glanced at him but didn’t point it out.

“Isn’t that a good sword? Is it expensive?” Jeremy asked.

“It’s the work of the Golden Anvil clan.”

“Hyu, how great. I’m envious. I also want to buy a new sword.”

As they talked, the two people started walking together.

Jeremy started to whistle again. Crockta didn't know where it came from, but there was a melody to it. It wasn't too bad to walk leisurely while listening to Jeremy.

"You are good." He said.

"When I was a child, I was proud of both my whistling and my sword skills." Jeremy started whistling again. The sound was crisp, and sounded good overall. "Orc brother, do you know any songs?"

"Songs?"

"I don't think that a whistle can come out well from an orc's lips, so how about a song? Your voice is pretty good."

"A song."

There was the orc song that he had learned from a pub in Orcrox. Maybe he should try it once. Crockta coughed. Jeremy looked at him with expectant eyes.

"Hmm hmm." He cleared his throat. It was slightly embarrassing singing this alone. However, he couldn't betray Jeremy's expectations, so he started awkwardly singing the warrior's song.

"We are orcs! The mighty orcs! You'll be in trouble if you mess with us! The great warriors have appeared. Humans, get lost! Elves... get lost! Dwarves, get lost...! Gnomes..."

It was an exciting song when sung in a group, but it was shameful to shout it out alone. The contents of 'Gnomes, get lost' followed by 'warriors don't need a woman' didn't fall from his mouth.

"....."

Jeremy looked taken aback.

".....!"

Jeremy flashed an awkward and nodded. "G-Great."

It was humiliating. It would've been okay if Jeremy had teased him. But even Jeremy

wasn't able to make fun of him! He even pretended and gave Crockta a compliment!

Crockta became anxious and dropped his head.

It was impossible for humans to understand the wonderful song of orc warriors. He tried to maintain the spirit of victory. But he was a warrior who could face reality, so he couldn't turn away from his conscious and pride.

"Isn't every culture different? Ha, haha."

Crockta felt more shame at Jeremy's nice remark. Therefore, Crockta cleared his throat again. He wanted to let this guy know what a real song was.

He said, "That was just a joke."

"No. The song was good, Brother."

"I will let you hear what a real song is."

"There is no need..."

Crockta grabbed Jeremy's shoulder. He flinched. "Jeremy."

"Yes...?"

"Have you ever been in love?"

"L... Love?"

"Yes, love."

"What... I did have a love relationship...?"

"Then listen."

Crockta was very serious. He closed his eyes and remembered the sound. Right now he had the low bass tones of an orc that most singers couldn't mimic.

He recalled his school days. That boy's genuineness as he wept still breathed in his chest. He poured out the distant memories into the lyrics. This song would suffice.

Crockta's voice poured out like a sigh.

"Just like I wasn't prepared for the rain, I sent you away with silence."

".....!"

Jeremy's eyes widened. Crockta's voice, which was strangely low, sank calmly. The lyrics he sang were beautiful and melancholy, just like a poem.

"For a while, I would get drunk or sleep at dawn, trying to forget you."

"....."

"I can't forget that time, I realized something while thinking..."

"Ah..."

Crockta's low voice rang out. The bass tone was filled with heartbreak emotions.

"A good person, if I had cherished you then, I wouldn't have been so sad when we broke up...!"

Jeremy closed his eyes. Suddenly, an old relationship passed through his mind.

Jane. Her name was unforgettable, Jane. Both of them were in love, but she was the daughter of a well known family, and Jeremy was just a swordsman from the back streets. It was a relationship that wasn't possible. A painful love. She eventually left him, but Jeremy couldn't blame her.

She... was a good person... Jeremy's eyes became wet.

Now Crockta's song was reaching the climax. The end of the heartbreak love song rang out.

"I would like to say that I will always protect you, please come back again... I'll make amends..."

His song was over.

Crockta closed his eyes and became drunk on his emotions for a while. Just like there

was black soul in reality, Elder Lord had the orcs. It was a vocal structure that seemed born for this type of song.

A stunning performance.

*Clap. Clap. Clap.*

He opened his eyes at the sound of applause. It was from Jeremy. However, he wasn't the only one applauding. Crockta and Jeremy turned their heads at the same time. There was a strange man wiping his watery eyes.

"I heard it very well. It was a song that really made me feel like my heart was breaking."

"You..."

The man was carrying a musical instrument resembling a guitar. "I am the minstrel Blackmore. I was heading this way when I heard a heartfelt voice by chance. It was a really great song."

"I am embarrassed."

"Don't be, Brother. It really was amazing. You were hiding your singing skills." Jeremy also acknowledged Crockta's song.

Blackmore asked, "Did you create that song?"

"No, I just imitated the song of another singer."

"I see... But the impression you have given me hasn't faded. What is your name?"

"I am called Crockta."

"Based on your direction, are you perhaps heading to Chesswood?"

"Yes."

"I am also heading there. Do you mind if I accompany you?"

"Feel free to do so."

Crockta and Jeremy were joined by Blackmore. A light conversation was started after that as Blackmore asked, "The lyrics to that song are especially beautiful. What is the title of the song?"

"As the lyrics said, it's called 'Good Person'."

"Good Person... How great. If you love a good person, you won't be sad if you break up..."

Blackmore nodded and wrote something in his notebook. "Of course... That doesn't mean that you weren't really sad..."

"Right..."

"Kuoh..."

Paradoxical lyrics that a man could understand! The eyes of the three men became distant. They were gazing at old memories.

"I had those days as well... Orc, why are you going to Chesswood? Are you going to participate in the contest...?"

"Contest?"

"Ah, you don't know. A small contest for minstrels will be held in Chesswood."

"Hoh, really?"

"It isn't a big competition. It's a small contest between the Chesswood villages, but the pride of the villages is at stake. I know since I am from Chesswood. That's why I returned home after a long time."

"I would like to see you play."

"Hahaha. Please come and watch. I will be singing."

The conversation continued as they walked along the road. They started to enjoy music while walking. Blackmore played his instrument while Jeremy whistled. Crockta hummed along with his bold voice.

A jazz conversation with their own melodies! It was fun to enjoy the music without worrying.

"What are you talking about?" Suddenly, a voice was heard. Crockta looked in the direction of the sound.

It was a group of humans. Crockta didn't miss the white star on the forehead of the woman riding in the lead.

"NPCs?"

"Isn't this a funny combination? Orc musician?"

There were five people, all users. Jeremy was unconcerned but Blackmore welcomed them cheerfully. He greeted them.

"Hello!"

The woman who seemed to be leading the group laughed and replied. "Yes, hello. Mister Minstrel!" She was also friendly to NPCs. She seemed to be familiar with Elder Lord.

"I am the minstrel Blackmore, and these two are Crockta and Jeremy, who are accompanying me to Chesswood."

Crockta and Jeremy lightly bowed.

"Oh my god, really? We are also going there."

She turned around and talked briefly with her group. She seemed to be asking if they should join up. "Then would you like to go with us? I would like to hear your music. Is everybody here a minstrel?"

"Hahaha. I am the only minstrel, but they are musically talented."

"Wow, great."

Blackmore declared, "Let's go together. Sharing music is a wonderful thing."

The party increased. There was now a group of eight people heading to Chesswood.

Blackmore was returning to his home after a long time, so he started to sing song reminiscent of his hometown. It was a singing skill that was just as wonderful as his skill with the musical instrument. The users clapped in response.

Suddenly, Jeremy grabbed the hem of Crockta's clothes and pulled him close.

"Huh?"

"Brother, are they people cursed by the stars?"

He asked in a low voice. He knew that Crockta was one of those cursed by the stars and that they could recognize each other. Crockta nodded. Jeremy whispered again to Crockta, "Be careful."

"About what?"

"Those guys and Chesswood."

Jeremy pulled Crockta a little further away from the group.

"Blackmore, I don't think he knows the news yet." Jeremy squinted at Blackmore. Blackmore was playing his instrument with a bright face. "Chesswood isn't an idle place right now."

"Then..."

"It is a land of discord due to the cursed people."

One user suddenly looked at the two of them. Jeremy slung his arm over Crockta and grinned. As the gaze of the user moved away, he whispered again in Crockta's ears. "So these people over there are enemies."

"I see."

Certainly, Enyanis of Arnin had referred to Chesswood as in a state of pandemonium. Crockta nodded.

"Do you understand?"

Jeremy hit Crockta's chest and released him. Blackmore's singing became louder.

In the distance, the dim shape of a village started to appear.

# **CHAPTER 42**

## **WATER (1)**

---

There was smoke coming from the village in the distance.

Only Crockta and Jeremy noticed the faint smoke, as Blackmore and the other users were still laughing at the music playing.

There was a problem from the beginning. Jeremy stroked the handle of his sword, his tension subsiding. No matter what happened, it would fine as long as he had his sword. He was a swordsman, a born killer that even Derek acknowledged.

He was also aware from Derek that the orc was a powerful warrior.

“Mister, there is smoke,” The woman suddenly said.

Blackmore stopped playing his musical instrument. “What’s going on?”

Smoke continued to emerge from the village, gradually covering the sky above the village. Blackmore’s face stiffened. “This... It looks like a fire. I should hurry.”

Blackmore rushed towards the village with his musical instrument on his shoulders. As Blackmore prepared to move, one user walked over and knocked him over. Blackmore tumbled down to the ground. A corner of the musical instrument was destroyed. He lay on the floor and moaned.

“W-What... kuoohh...”

The users chuckled.

“It has already started.”

“Hey, wait for me.”

“There isn’t enough here to share.”

Crockta watched the users talking. Jeremy shrugged and pulled out his sword.

“Brother, didn’t I tell you?”

“.....”

“This is why I hate the cursed ones. They are scum that will hit people in the back.” Jeremy glanced at Crockta and added, “Of course, I will watch you more.”

The users approached them. Unlike Blackmore, the two of them had weapons and one of them was an orc, so the users were cautious.

“Will you be okay against an orc?”

“Believe in me.”

All of the users pulled out their weapons. The magician stepped back and prepared to support from the rear.

“If you kids are in danger, then call for me.” The female user who first talked to Blackmore grinned. “Anyway, our kids are in control of areas A1 to C4.”

Jeremy whistled. His long sword sparkled in the sun. It was small compared to Crockta’s sword, but the amount of human blood that had covered it was enough to make a small stream.

“Guys, don’t you see that this orc brother is angry? Do you want him to be angry? Do you want to bleed?” Jeremy joked around as he narrowed the distance. His movements were light.

Crockta also held his greatsword and lowered his center of gravity, gathering enough momentum to break through at once. Crockta scanned the area. It seemed that it was possible to take care of the front line, but the magician was the problem. He was already muttering something to complete a spell.

Magicians were always bothersome opponents. Crockta carefully looked for gaps in the enemies.

At that moment... Crockta’s eyes widened. Suddenly, the magician fell without a sound. Blackmore was standing behind the magician. Blackmore met Crockta’s eyes and winked. The crowd in front was still unaware of what happened to the magician. Crockta nodded and charged forward.

“Bul’tar——!”

Shouting the battle cry of the orc warriors before battle had now become a habit. Jeremy also ran after Crockta. Crockta rushed and swung his greatsword, the users pushed back by the impact. Jeremy leapt from behind Crockta and instantly pierced a user’s neck with his sword. He was like the wind.

The confused users yelled out, “Magic! Use it quickly! Why aren’t you using it?”

“What are you doing?”

Then they paled as they turned around. Blackmore didn’t care as he looked at them with his foot on the magician’s chest. At that moment, the users felt sure of their deaths.

It seemed like they could already feel Crockta and Jeremy’s blades against their skin.

Their heads flew through the sky.

Crockta and Jeremy were too strong for them. They weren’t just ordinary people, or various minstrels passing by, but a real orc warrior and a notorious swordsman from the back alleys of the fugitive city of Anail.

The users’ bodies turned white. It was the last of those cursed by the stars. Their equipment fell to the ground. There was nothing that looked great. Besides, they needed to hurry to the village.

Blackmore immediately started running towards the village. Jeremy and Crockta looked at each other and ran after him.

The village was a terrible mess. Several houses were burning. Battles between NPCs and users were occurring in various places in the village.

Blackmore looked around and found a piece of farm equipment. He broke the edge and made it into a club, swinging it in the air.

Jeremy and Crockta glanced at each other as they saw it. Blackmore’s actions were quite skilled. Blackmore squeezed the rod, like he was trying to regain some old senses, before running into battle.

Crockta and Jeremy also helped in the battles. The villagers were all farmers, but they used their equipment to fight against the users. Their attacks turned one or two users into white particles.

Crockta's greatsword beheaded a user.

The users were too weak. There were some decent ones, but the majority of them looked like beginners that had just started Elder Lord. There were many people who ran away from Crockta's fearsome appearance.

"Orc!"

"Run away! An orc!"

"Run away! Let's go!"

"I'm scared!"

"Monster!"

The users hurriedly ran away.

"....." Crockta didn't have a chance to fight properly with them.

Jeremy giggled and knocked against Crockta's shoulder with a teasing attitude. "Hey, Brother. Brother's face, well, it no longer frightens me as much. Don't take it personally."

"Noisy." Crockta turned around before adding something else. "I am a handsome orc."

That's right. Crockta was a handsome orc. In Orcrox, the female NPCs often ogled him. He had customized his face to be as horrible as possible to make fun of his sister, but it seemed to be attractive to orcs.

Jeremy burst out laughing.

"By the way, what's going on here? The cursed people are gathering together and attacking. Besides, aren't they all weak?"

Crockta confirmed the equipment of the users that fell on the ground. They were all

Common grade equipment.

“I can roughly guess.”

The users whom they defeated with Blackmore said that their area was from A1 to C4, and the users here had poor combat abilities. The local characteristic of Chesswood was that the villages were scattered about in a checkered pattern.

The recurring evils that humans committed in online games were being repeated in Elder Lord.

“Blackmore! You came back!”

“Blackmore?”

There was a disturbance. The villagers finished fighting and discovered that Blackmore had returned. However, their reaction wasn't like what Crockta expected. Rather, it was the opposite.

“Why did this guy all of a sudden...”

“I thought you left?”

They were reluctant to talk to Blackmore. Some even spat on the ground, like he was unlucky.

Blackmore just looked down and touched his half-broken instrument.



“Haha. Blackmore, becoming a minstrel, I really can't believe it.”

Crockta and Jeremy stayed at the home of Blackmore's uncle, Ingram. He was tall, sturdy, and looked very strong for his age.

“You didn't originally leave your home to become a minstrel?” They asked.

“Blackmore? This guy was completely...” Ingram grinned as he gaze at Blackmore. “A bully.”

"Ohh."

"I wasn't that bad," Blackmore pleaded.

"Weren't you a gangster working for a private money lender?"

"What...?"

Blackmore dropped his head.

Jeremy couldn't help shaking his head. Crockta nodded in agreement. Then he whispered to Jeremy, "A bully, a gangster."

"...Ugh." Jeremy struck Crockta with his elbow.

"All he knew was how to fight and how to wield a spear, and that was all he did in Chesswood."

"I didn't do too badly."

"Blackmore became notorious in Chesswood. He was called a cruel bastard, a man with no feelings."

Under the full moon, Ingram treated the two humans and one orc to his homemade beer. The taste was quite good. Crockta thought it was comparable to the beer that he drank in Orcrox.

"I regret it," Blackwood said.

"Yes, I didn't hear from you after you left Chesswood. So how did you become a minstrel?"

Blackmore's explanation wasn't long.

After leaving Chesswood, he wandered from place to place. With his skills, there was work wherever he went. He worked as a mercenary, a soldier, an escort, and various other things, but there was always regret in his heart. He made money from people's suffering.

Then by chance, he saw a minstrel playing at a pub. The minstrel's skills weren't that

great, but he saw people laughing and having fun. Blackmore was eating expensive food in a room that was much more expensive than theirs, but he seemed more unhappy.

Thus, he abandoned everything and became a minstrel. That was 10 years ago.

“The most emotionless person is doing the most sentimental job in the world.”

Blackmore laughed bitterly, “Isn’t it because of that child?”

“.....”

Blackmore gulped down his beer and asked, “How is she?”

“Married.”

“To who?”

“A decent person.”

“Then that’s fine. Say no more.”

Blackmore also seemed to have his own story of heartbreak. His mood became so heavy that Ingram, Crockta, and Jeremy couldn’t open their mouths. Blackmore changed the topic and spoke, “The people cursed by the stars keep coming?”

“Yes, it’s serious. I tried to ask for help but...”

The villages united to block the attacks of those cursed by the stars, but it was getting harder.

Crockta’s eyes sunk. This area must’ve been designated as a hunting ground to level up, with the areas distributed between different clans. It was rare for NPCs with high levels to be scattered around villages like these. There were also no professional guards.

The best hunting ground. In addition, the clans would be controlling the hunting grounds in order to monopolize it.

“Tomorrow, the Chesswood village leaders have decided to meet to discuss the

problem," Ingram said.

Blackmore continued to drink before rising from his seat. "Uncle, I have become a minstrel, so I will sing you a song. However, my instrument is broken."

"Hoh, is it a song that you made?"

"That's right. I missed this place, so I made a song for Chesswood."

"If it's terrible, then I'll stop listening straight away."

"Of course."

Then Blackmore started to sing. Unlike Ingram's worries, it was a wonderful melody. The introductory part was strangely sad, but then it became more exciting.

The audience clapped in time with him. As they listened to the lyrics, they felt like they were the narrator rejoicing as he ran towards his hometown.

"I have travelled to many places in the world, always looking for new things. But I realized something. I had already found the things that I was looking for."

"....."

"Dancing under the moonlight, singing in the rain. Oh! I'm happy to be back home! Laughing under the sun, running along different trails. Ah! I'm happy to be back home!"

# **CHAPTER 43**

## **WATER (2)**

---

Chesswood was an area where dozens of small villages were scattered like squares on a chessboard. It was usually just called Chesswood, but the inhabitants of Chesswood liked to differentiate their villages from each other. It was like lines splitting each village apart.

There was a subtle fight of pride between them.

“I heard that in Cactus Village, your bull gave birth to twin calves?”

“So you’ve already heard. Both of them are very strong, hahahat.”

“But there is something funny, as in my Dandelion Village, our cow gave birth to triplets. Cactus Village Chief, too small! Kelkelkel.”

“...Kuk. C-Congratulations. Ugh.”

These types of arguments happened often, even during a meeting of the village heads. This was the town hall at Edelweiss Village in the center of Chesswood. Representatives from each village gathered for the meeting.

Once the leaders of the villages gathered, sometimes the atmosphere could get rough.

“As I said, our Gold Village’s ‘Come Back Taicondero’ will win.

“How funny, that isn’t even close. Our Natasha Village’s ‘Youth Rain’ will make you pee when you hear it.”

“You say such pretty words. Do you want to duel with me?”

“Ha! I am James. Do you want to make me an active volcano? Challenge me to a duel? Let’s go! Ha!”

“Okay, I’ll slam your ugly face with my sweet serenade. Gather the audience!”

The village chiefs of the Gold Village and Natasha Village growled at each other. They were on the brink of a brutal song showdown in Chesswood's traditional Colosseum, where the losing singer's life was at risk.

Crockta and Jeremy shook their heads as they watched. "Can these people fight?"

"....."

The people of Chesswood weren't fighters! It was understandable why Blackmore, who once worked for a money lender, was the object of fear. Blackmore, who wielded weapons like the Chesswood people sang their songs, would've looked like a demon.

"Everybody be quiet! We shouldn't be fighting among ourselves!"

Ingram, Blackmore's uncle, calmed everyone down. He was a normal farmer these days, but he was still respected by people as the former chief.

"They're attacking us because we're scattered and easier to defeat."

"What benefits will they gain from killing us?"

"The enemies are those cursed by the stars. They are trying to kill us for their achievement points."

"What? They can build up achievements, even if they do evil?"

"Hah... They really are cursed people."

A user's achievements points didn't depend on them doing good or evil. As long as they did things that affected the world of Elder Lord, it would accumulate proportionately. Furthermore, killing NPCs were a great help in the growth of skills. Although it was expressed as achievement points, their aim was to acquire experience to raise their skill level.

The various clans were trying to raise their power in Chesswood.

"I sent people to the castle but... it will take time..."

"We can't wait for them."

“What do we do?”

“How about collecting money from the villages and hiring some mercenaries?”

The chiefs were troubled. They used farm equipment and hunting tools to prevent the users' attacks, but the enemy was gradually becoming stronger.

Crockta also closed his eyes and thought hard.

High level users were gradually appearing to help their clans. Chesswood would be swept away. He only planned to get rid of the Thawing Balhae Clan but he was troubled by Chesswood's situation. It wasn't easy to distinguish between enemies.

It was at that moment.

“Everyone! It is serious!”

The door to the meeting room opened.

“There's currently a massive attack on Dandelion Village...!”

“What?”

The leader of Dandelion Village, who had boasted of the triplet calves, jumped to his feet.

Crockta confirmed the direction based on the map attached to the town hall's wall, and Dandelion Village was in one of the outlying areas. If he compared it to a checkerboard, it was one of the corner positions.

“I'll go right now!”

“Have you told Chrysanthemum and Camellia Village?”

“Yes! Support is coming from the nearby villages!”

The chiefs tried to rush out straight away, but Ingram calmed everyone down.

“It would be better if we don't go right away!”

“Then what should we do?”

“Let’s discuss some countermeasures first.”

“What about Dandelion Village?”

The meeting room fell into a mess. Then someone spoke, “I will go to Dandelion Village, so you should stay here and establish some countermeasures.”

It was Blackmore, who was sitting in a corner with Crockta and Jeremy. The meeting room fell silent as he spoke.

“Blackmore...!”

“It was true that you returned.”

“Oh my god.”

The infamous Blackmore made them even more nervous! Crockta and Jeremy could guess what Blackmore was like in the past just by their expressions. Then Blackmore said.

“I’ve washed my hands, and now I would just like to help the villages. As the representatives of Chesswood, you should develop measures for Chesswood’s protection. Isn’t that your role?”

“.....!”

Blackmore spoke solemnly. The chiefs nodded.

“Indeed... We won’t be a big help if we go now.”

“If Blackmore goes, then he can get rid of all of them.”

“Indeed, he is a great fighter.”

He was terrifying when he was an enemy, but more reassuring than anyone else when he was an ally. The chiefs felt relief that Blackmore was fighting for them.

“Would you like to help?”

Blackmore asked Crockta and Jeremy. He had already experienced the combat power of the two victims.

“I understand.”

Crockta nodded.

“I have already decided to help this brother.” Jeremy also agreed.

The three men who met on the road were now heading to Dandelion Village for Chesswood’s protection.



The three of them borrowed horses. Crockta didn’t know how to ride a horse, but Blackmore and Jeremy helped him. While it was very hard for the horse to carry his heavy body, there was no time to care. They needed to save Dandelion Village first.

“Over there!”

They arrived at Dandelion Village, the battle there already in full swing. A huge number of users were gathered and slaughtering the villagers.

“.....!”

Blackmore’s face stiffened, his face distorting. It was an evil expression that was hard to believe for the minstrel who had always been smiling. He was carrying a spear on his back. He instantly jumped down from his horse.

He swung his spear and swept the users away, his spear moving like a storm. Extremely deadly!

Crockta and Jeremy belatedly got off their horses and participated in the fight. The three of them shook up the battlefield.

“Bul’tar———!”

The orc’s battle cry rang out. Crockta charged, causing users to fly through the air as his greatsword sliced apart the bodies of users. Their upper bodies were split in half and their guts spilled out.

The momentum could often decide victory in a war. Crockta kept yelling out battle cries to trample on the enemy's morale.

"I'll slice you to pieces——!"

Then he kicked aside the bodies parts and scattered flesh. The sight of a blood-covered orc warrior wielding a greatsword filled the users with fear.

Crockta roared, "Kuaaaaaah——!"

A true butcher of the battlefield! Blood spurted everywhere he went. The villagers, who were on the defensive, started to move forward as they became emboldened by Blackmore and the orc warrior's appearance.

Blackmore and Crockta jumped and slaughtered users everywhere they went. White particles shone all around them. There was no mercy in their attacks.

Some frightened users turned around and started to run away.

"This bastard!" A user ran over to Jeremy, wielding a sword.

Did he look easy? But Jeremy's sword moved like the wind and pierced the user's neck.

"Life is real, cursed brother."

"Kuooooh..."

The skills were excellent. Jeremy pulled out his sword and started running around. There were sacrifices, but the villages started to gradually gain the advantage. The battle centered around the activities of the three men.

"Brother! Have strength!" Jeremy shouted.

Crockta was in the middle of punishing a spear user. The user tried to attack the families' members hiding in the warehouse, but Crockta appeared and took care of it at once. The residents sighed with relief. One mother was holding a crying baby in her arms.

"Dirty bastards."

Crockta immediately ran out of the warehouse and scanned the situation. There was a group of users, which were his next target. The moment that Crockta was about to rush over, he was suddenly blown away by an unseen force.

Crockta rolled around on the ground as he was struck by a skill.

“Ugh!”

“An orc suddenly appeared?” A man asked as he approached Crockta.

Crockta instinctively felt that he was strong. He got up quickly and restored his breathing. The man was wearing expensive equipment. It was reminiscent of the high level user Crockta met on the Arnin Plains in the past, but this user was on a completely different level.

The users shouted.

“Higashi came! Ranker! A ranker came to help!”

“Bugilma!”

“Bulgima came to help!”

Ranker. They were the top 500 influential users in Elder Lord.

Considering the enormous population of the world that was playing Elder Lord, being in the top 500 was truly known as the peak. Elder Sage Corporation provided them with benefits and they were treated as a star.

Higashi was a ranker. Crockta felt despair as a sense of pressure that he had never felt before manifested.

“This place now seems fun.”

Higashi smiled as he held his sword and shield.

Crockta looked around. Blackmore and Jeremy also seemed to be fighting high level users. The critical people were marked.

The users' morale rose at Higashi's appearance and they started attacking the

villagers with renewed vigor. The villages collapsed under the swords and Users laughed happily as they slaughtered random people.

Crockta's eyes flashed.

"Hey Orc. Your opponent is me."

But Higashi didn't let him leave. Crockta clenched his greatsword.

The weight of being a ranker wasn't small. Their skills, skill levels, and equipment were all high levelled. Crockta moved slowly to look for gaps, but Higashi also moved in tandem to maintain his distance.

Higashi moved first. His body appeared in front of Crockta as if space had folded. It was too close to swing his greatsword.

".....!"

The shield strongly pushed against Crockta. He blocked it with his greatsword, but his sight was momentarily covered by the shield. He couldn't anticipate where the sword would move beyond the shield.

Crockta threw himself to the ground and rolled his body.

"Hoh."

He got up while covered in dirt. Higashi locked at Crockta and turned his blade round and round.

"If you were a little late than you would've been stung. Your judgement is fast. "

"....."

The connection between sword and shield was excellent. It was a real battle. Indeed, it is clear that Higashi did martial arts. He might be the strongest opponent Higashi had fought so far.

Crockta gathered all of the strength in his body.

[Indomitable Fighting Spirit (Rare) has been used.]

[Tattoos of Honour (Rare) has been used.]

[Leyteno's Greatsword Technique (Rare) will exert an extreme performance.]

His senses sharpened. A faint steam rose from his greatsword. The skill proficiency of Leyteno's Greatsword Technique had temporarily risen. It wasn't a situation where he should conserve his stamina.

[Mind's Eye's (Special) has opened.]

Mind's Eye opened.

Powerful.

Higashi approached. Thanks to Mind's Eye, Higashi's movements seemed a little clearer, but Crockta felt heavier. He could see the strength of the enemy more clearly.

“Bul’tar.”

Crockta muttered. He had to fight while being prepared for death. It was at that moment that he saw something else thanks to Mind's Eye.

“.....!”

Someone was hiding in the village. The shape of the person using stealth was dimly visible. Crockta retreated as he stared in that direction.

“.....?”

Higashi was confused.

[Mind's Eye's (Special) has penetrated through the Stealth skill.]

Crockta could see the faint figure of a woman wearing leather and a mask. The woman was standing next to a building and shooting this scene. This outfit was familiar. Her face had never been revealed, but her character was well known from her videos, like a trademark.

She spread the wicked deeds of users and announced their names. The Youvidser who had shot Crockta in the past.

It was Laney.

# **CHAPTER 44**

## **SMOKE (1)**

---

Higashi didn't let Crockta think for any longer, charging over straight away. Crockta defended while his head was busily brainstorming.

Think. He had to think.

He staggered as he was hit by the shield again. Higashi struck with not only his sword, but with his shield as well. Crockta concentrated on thinking as he avoided Higashi's attacks.

How would he win this war?

He swung his greatsword, which bounced off the shield. The attack was filled with momentum, but Higashi's shield didn't move. Rather, Crockta was kicked and rolled across the ground.

He scanned the battlefield as he struggled to get up. Blackmore and Jeremy were being simultaneously pressured by several users. In the first place, this was a war caused by the clan for their own purposes. Their numbers would gradually increase.

In the other clans, there might be really strong users like Higashi. Crockta's power alone was insufficient to protect Chesswood.

Crockta once again squinted at Laney. Even if he lost the battle, he had to win the war.

Crockta's mindset had already returned to the Raven of the past as he focused on the most efficient method of winning. If his chances of victory were slim to none, he should struggle to get the most out of the situation. In order to do that, he would crawl on the ground to make it possible.

Anyway, he couldn't win this battle. The number of users kept increasing, and even Jeremy was now trying to escape from the battle. Blackmore was also gradually becoming conscious of the rear. They would soon have to retreat.

Crockta closed his eyes as he heard the screams of the villagers.

"What? Are you giving up?" Higashi asked.

Crockta laughed instead of answering.

'Yes, look at me, Higashi. Take a look at me, Laney.

If there is to be a fight, then I'll give you a hard time. Look at me.'



Laney rapidly gained fame after uploading the fight between the orc and the user hunters. Now her Youvids channel had tens of thousands of people visiting a day.

The reason she did this was insignificant.

She didn't like bad people and she also got money. She was able to earn money from upsetting the villains. That's all it was. Laney wanted to distort the faces of those using dirty tricks while trying to avoid the eyes of others.

It worked better than she thought, and she was now a famous Youvidser.

Reports from other people also increased. There was a piece of information that caught her eyes.

The famous Thawing Balhae and other big clans were gathering in one area. Furthermore, they started to control the access of other users. Those who didn't belong to the clans were forced out by their threats.

The name of the area was Chesswood.

It was well known that clans would slaughter weak NPCs for their own benefit. There was a lot of talk about this in the Elder Lord community, but it was the first time in Elder Lord that they tried to rule an area and exclude others on such a large scale.

Laney's senses tingled. She wanted to reveal disgusting actions.

She hated the big clans. They used their size to nurture rankers and raise the clan. If the former rankers enjoyed the fantasy life of Elder Lord, the newest rankers were just mechanical users fostered to make money.

It stunk. She went to learn what was happening in Chesswood. Her class was the hidden piece called Shadow Assassin, and it was a character that specialized in hiding in the shadows. No one noticed her.

When she first arrived, nothing had happened. It was an ordinary village. The special point was that all of the villagers loved singing and didn't know how to fight. It was a village where the residents welcomed travelers and lived without locking their doors.

But Laney had accused users and she knew how dangerous this could be. The clans would erase the Chesswood area in order to raise the level of the clan members. The users entered Chesswood disguised as travelers, dividing sections of Chesswood among themselves.

But Laney was distressed. Could she really file a complaint about this? The clans were gathering and killing NPCs, disturbing the balance of Elder Lord. But was this really something that people would consider a crime? Would they respect NPCs who weren't users?

She didn't know. So she just continued shooting mechanically. Her idea was to watch until the end.

Then the full-scale attack of the clans began. Laney was able to find a black bandana that she had seen somewhere before.

“Bul’tar———!”

“.....!”

He had changed, but it was the same bandana. An old bandana with the mark of the Blacksmith Company on it. He was bigger, and there were tattoos all over his body, but he was the same orc.

He appeared and started to fight for the villagers. The battle turned against the users in an instant. He was like an incarnation of the battlefield as he ruthlessly swung his greatsword and cut down the users. There was a fountain of blood every time he moved his greatsword.

However, it was only for a while. Within a few minutes, the Yamato Clan's vice-leader, ranker Higashi appeared. He and the other high level users had joined to help the clan members. He was the main force of the Yamato clan.

The orc and Higashi fought. At first, the orc fought enthusiastically, but was eventually pushed back by the difference in power. Higashi effortlessly suppressed the orc.

After Higashi appeared, the situation changed again. The residents resisting the users were broken, and the men helping along with the orc gradually retreated. But the orc wielded his greatsword till the very end.

“Ugh!”

Higashi’s one-handed sword sliced the orc’s thigh. The orc fell to his knees.

“Why don’t you run like your colleagues?”

“.....”

The orc didn’t answer. He raised his body using his greatsword. The two people clashed again.

The orc’s greatsword reached Higashi’s neck, but Higashi blocked it with his shield. The greatsword was deflected, revealing the orc’s abdomen that Higashi’s sword instantly sliced apart. Blood gushed out.

The orc grabbed his abdomen.

“I’ll give you an opportunity. If you run away now, then I won’t chase you.” Higashi twirled his one-handed sword as he walked up to the orc. “Orc, why do you need to die for the humans over there?”

Higashi shrugged. Now the battle was over, and the only thing left was the massacre. The villagers couldn’t resist and were becoming the users’ experience. In addition, those with weapons kept joining the battle.

“Yes, even your allies ran away.”

Laney filmed all of this. She wondered what the orc would answer.

But he never opened his mouth and continued the meaningless fight.

The orc rushed back. There were wounds all over his body. He was bloody. He tried to resist Higashi, but his body didn’t listen.

"Now this is just disgusting, you bastard!" Higashi cried out.

During the fight, the orc slashed at one of Higashi's arms. It wasn't a big wound, but Higashi's face distorted. He swung his sword with a fierce momentum and hit the orc, who flew through the air.

It was towards Laney's location. She hurriedly moved her body. The orc hit the wall where she had been standing by and rolled to the floor. Blood stained the wall. The orc crouched on the ground and used the greatsword to raise his body up. It seemed like it was harder for him to stand.

Laney felt an unknown emotion. What caused the orc to keep standing up?

She recalled the voice of the orc in the past video that she shot.

'Where are the people who know honor?'

Higashi approached and said, "I definitely gave you a chance to get away. You have chosen death, you stupid orc."

His sword raised itself high in the sky to deal the final blow. The blade glinted in the sun.

The silent orc finally opened his mouth.

"You, is that right?"

"What?"

The orc raised his gaze. It was an intense gaze.

"You."

The orc straightened and raised his greatsword. He yet again took a step towards Higashi. The orc asked, "You, can you just turn around and run away as you see people being slaughtered for no reason?"

".....!"

Laney felt like she had been hit with a hammer on the head at those words.

Higashi's face distorted. "What are you saying now, you bastard!"

"You don't understand." The orc grinned through his bloody face. "It is you who is stupid, not me."

"Hah."

Higashi grinned and looked at the sky and angrily wielded his sword. "This bastard!"

The orc blocked with his greatsword. Then the shield slammed into his torso. He rolled on the ground together with the shield. But the orc couldn't get on his feet again. Higashi walked towards him with a face that was red with anger.

He intended to really finish this. But Higashi was forced to stop moving.

At that moment. A woman suddenly appeared beside the orc. A masked woman wearing black clothes that clung to her body appeared.

Laney, it was her.

Higashi was unable to move because he was wary of the unknown strength he felt from her.

"Who?"

Laney didn't answer. Instead, she spoke to the orc. "Hey."

The eyes of the fallen orc turned towards her. "... You?"

"There is no need to know who I am."

The orc stood up again. However, it seemed like it was difficult to raise his body due to the accumulated damage to his body. In the end, the orc stretched out on the ground. Laney raised her palm in a gesture for Higashi not to approach and asked the orc again.

"Why are you fighting? It is a dog's death."

Laney couldn't understand it. The orc, Crockta laughed. Crockta squeezed out all the power in his body and got up again.

[It wouldn't be unusual for your broken body to die right away.]

[Nevertheless, you keep getting back up.]

[I pay homage to your spirit.]

[Indomitable Fighting Spirit (Rare) has been upgraded to Combative Spirit (Essence).]

“Only humans worry about such calculations.”

Crockta raised his greatsword and gestured to Laney to move. Laney turned sideways.

This was the last one. Higashi was in front of them. Just before he charged forward, Crockta whispered to Laney.

“A warrior doesn’t yield to injustice.”

That was one of the laws of a warrior that he heard from Lenox, an oath that he had sworn to uphold.

Laney didn’t answer. It was no longer necessary to talk. Crockta glared at Higashi. It was time to end this. Crockta squeezed out his remaining strength to deliver a battle cry.

“An honorable death is better than a craven life———!”

His roar shook the area.

Crockta ran forward. Higashi, who had paused at Laney’s appearance, also got ready for the final clash. The two rushed at the same time.

At that moment, Laney reached out and hit the back of Crockta’s neck.

“.....!”

Neat work! Crockta collapsed. Laney grabbed Crockta’s huge body.

"What?"

Higashi hesitated. He felt like Laney was a tough opponent and had been wary since she appeared. Laney just sighed. She cast a Shadow Assassin skill.

[Shadow Escape (Essence) has been used.]

[It can't be used for another 168 hours.]

Laney and Crockta's bodies started blurring. They were like a shadow as they became translucent and disappeared, completely gone from the previous scene. Laney's body appeared far away from Dandelion Village.

"Aigoo, aigoo. Ah, why did I do that? What's going on?"

Laney grabbed her head. It was an impulsive behavior.

As she was groaning, Crockta was snuck a peek at Laney from the ground, smiling with satisfaction.

That's right.

He actually wasn't knocked out! Laney was strong, but that wasn't enough to make an orc faint. He just pretended to be stunned. He didn't know that she had such a miraculous skill, but he was able to achieve the result that he wanted.

Had she filmed it?

Crockta smiled before hurriedly closing his eyes and pretending to be stunned as Laney glanced over him. Laney's lamenting continued. A man had to resort to trickery to grab her heart!

If he asked for help, then Laney would've ignored him. Instead, he showed the tragic image of a warrior who was about to die. Even if she didn't help, Crockta would lose nothing. He was a user. He could live again. He didn't care about death.

In the first place, what he was trying to save wasn't his own life.

He wanted Laney's help with Chesswood's plight.

In order to win the war, he needed to use everything in his favor.

# **CHAPTER 45**

## **SMOKE (2)**

---

It was a strange day.

“Hmm...”

Kim Chuljung, the middle-aged sales manager, smoked a cigarette on his way home from work.

Today, he felt a strange sense of separation from the world, as if he was different from the world around him. It was a subtle emotion that made him suddenly look back at himself. These days, the behavior of new employees sometimes embarrassed him.

This was the flow of time. Kim Chuljung thought about the routine of his company as he put out his cigarette and prepared to leave the alley.

At the corner where he was standing, a group of students were smoking on the other side. Despite wearing uniforms, they showed no signs of hesitation. They noticed Kim Chuljung, but the children didn't care and lit up the cigarettes anyways.

“...Hah.”

Kim Chuljung stepped closer to the children. “Students, you're all kid wearing school uniforms, so can you really smoke like this?”

They glanced at each other before looking back at Kim Chuljung. They started to giggle. “Who cares, Ahjussi. We're smoking cigarettes that we bought with our own money.”

“These guys...”

“A meddler has come, how lame.”

“Pfft! What a funny bastard.”

The students echoed their slang amongst themselves as they laughed.

"He smells like cigarettes; that's why he's so bald."

"Let's go. Dirty, dirty."

".....!"

They walked past Kim Chuljung and started to leisurely stroll somewhere else. Not one of them put out their cigarettes. They smoked in the streets as they headed to some place only they knew. Kim Chuljung stared at their backs. He once again felt an unknown feeling.

It was an era where virtual reality games were popular, cars moved on their own, and artificial organs were being transplanted. The world was changing.

"Hmm..."

He pointed out students smoking and was treated like a meddler. Actually, that wasn't the case. It was just that he was old-fashioned.

Kim Chuljung smiled bitterly and started walking. But today's strange day didn't let him go.

An excited child was running and bumped into Kim Chuljung before falling down. Kim Chuljung grabbed the child; however, the ice cream that the child was holding had spilled onto Kim Chuljung's clothes.

"This..." Kim Chuljung laughed bitterly. The child gasped and watched Kim Chuljung with fear. "This guy, you shouldn't run around on the streets."

"....."

"If you make a mistake, then you should say sorry."

"Mother!" A young woman came running over. She quickly figured out what happened between her child and Kim Chuljung, sweeping her child into her arms. "Are you okay?"

"Yes."

"This ahjussi didn't do anything bad to you?"

Kim Chulgung was outraged. "What are you saying?"

"The world is rough."

"My pants, do you see it? If a child makes a mistake, then their parents should apologize."

"What did my child do? Don't you know how to do laundry?"

"Hah..."

The young woman took her child away before Kim Chulgung could answer. Kim Chulgung was left alone, feeling that unknown emotion as he headed home. His common sense wasn't the common sense of the world anymore.

He came back home, but no one welcomed him. Instead, only the faces in the family photos hanging in the living room smiled at him. He was the father of a flock of wild geese.

As a middle-aged man who went back and forth from his company, he had worked hard since he was young. He reached the position of a manager, but now he had to prepare for retirement. He only occasionally heard the voices of his wife and children over the phone.

The things that happened today made him even more lonely. It was a day where he found nothing to live for, so he couldn't help but feel overwhelmed.

He sat on the couch and turned on the television. The screen flashed in the living room. Today's topic, a video of Elder Lord, was being played. His sunken eyes stared at it. It was a video from the famous Youvidser called Laney.

"...Oh, this."

He felt that emotion that he had been feeling all day again. No matter how much the world had changed, why was such a horrible sight still occurring?

Those who were called giant clans were slaughtering the inhabitants of a village. They were game characters, but the way they were crying and begging for their lives looked more real than actual reality. If someone had a human conscience, how could they stab women and children, just because they were artificial intelligences?

Why was it good to kill those known as NPCs? As someone who once played Elder Lord enthusiastically, Kim Chuljung was well aware of how lifelike the NPCs were.

Suddenly, the focus of the video moved. The scene of the massacre moved to the side. Now it wasn't a human in the center of the screen. It was an orc who most people thought of as monsters. The orc was persistently resisting the users who killed the NPCs. His body became bloody as he kept falling to the ground and rising again to defend the villagers.

The humans were monsters while the monster was acting human, a paradoxical sight!

Kim Chuljung sighed.

The orc seemed to balance on the edge between life and death, but he never actually died. He swung his greatsword. Kim Chuljung felt something stir in his chest as the orc never gave up until the end.

What made this orc fight like that?

*-You, is that right?*

The orc was talking.

*-You.*

In Kim Chuljung's eyes, he was a bloody hero.

*-You, can you just turn around and run away as you watch people being slaughtered for no reason?*

Kim Chuljung unconsciously rose from his spot. The breathing of the person filming became rough as they felt the same thing as Kim Chuljung.

The video recorder intervened. The voice of the recorder was a woman. She asked why the orc continued with the reckless fight. The orc smiled like it was natural.

*-Only humans worry about such calculations.*

He whispered.

*-A warrior doesn't yield to injustice.*

Fighting to the end against injustice.

It was an old-fashioned idea. The orc was a really old-fashioned man. He was like an antique, as most middle-aged men these days ended up buying sports cars. In this age where heroic beliefs only belonged in history, it was rare to find such a person. But heroes had died and left their names behind.

The orc and the ranker rushed at each other and the video ended. Kim Chuljung didn't move. He stood there for a while, wondering about this emotion. It was strange, but it was always present inside of him.

He thought for a while. Kim Chuljung opened his eyes. They were no longer the weary eyes of a middle-aged man going about his daily routine. It was the eyes of a passionate man.

Kim Chuljung muttered, "I forgot."

He headed to the empty room that used to belong to his son. There was one capsule to access Elder Lord. After becoming distant with his family, it was something he had used to relieve the loneliness. Dust had piled up because he hadn't used it for a while.

"Men are wine."

It was the moment that the sales manager Kim Chuljung, no, the worst necromancer, Iron, returned to Elder Lord.



"Yo, man! Wassup, man!"

"Hey, long time no see! Whoa. Good to see you again!"

"Me too Bro! Hey come inside!"

Joseph and Bob embraced each other in the natural manner of Americans. The members had gathered at Bob's house.

Joseph, Bob, Elia, and Gary.

They were old friends and had been partners since their youth. They enjoyed an old hobby that only a few people remembered these days.

TRPG! They rolled the dice and tackled all types of adventures in an imaginary world. They were dragon slayers hunting dragons, heroes who saved the world, and sometimes demons who destroyed the world.

But times changed, and there were now virtual reality games. As the medium to achieve their imagination appeared, their area of activity gradually became the virtual reality game. In that place, they boasted the best roleplay.

That's right. They were widely known in the American community as intrinsic roleplayers. Bob's home had four virtual reality connection capsules placed side-by-side.

Before connection, they had a light snack time as they discussed what to do for the day.

"Hey, I found an interesting video."

"What is it?"

"Look."

Bob opened his tablet and the video was played. It was from the Youvidser called Laney. Due to the advanced interpreter skill, they could understand the videos of other countries without any problems.

"Hmm..."

None of them could open their mouths. The video was shocking. The clans slaughtered the NPCs, but an orc appeared and fought against them like a hero. An unbreakable spirit that fought against injustice!

Bob looked at the eyes of his friends in turn. After a long time together, they knew what Bob was trying to say. Gary nodded.

"The theme of the day is the endangered village and the four warriors that saved it?"

"Not bad."

They laughed. Elia asked, “But that orc, is he alive?”

They couldn’t verify it in the video. However, death was a strong possibility. But Bob’s expression was bright.

“That is what we will check.”

“If he died?”

“The four warriors will maintain his role.”

Bob rose from his seat.

“How far is Chesswood?”

“Let’s see.”

“I’ll prepare my buff right away.”

They entered the capsules. The Elder Road roleplaying crew that anyone in the RPG community would recognize, F4! They moved into the world of Elder Lord.



A man checked the Internet forums. A new post appeared. He clicked on it.

[Title: Brothers, the time has come.

Brothers, everyone would have seen that video. My hands are trembling as I write this.

Our compatriot is spilling his blood. He is struggling alone in order to prevent their evil deeds. I don’t think there was any brother who didn’t tremble at the sight.

It is time to let those dirty humans know who we are.

I am heading there now.

I leave some space for my brothers.]

It wasn't long but the comments were overwhelming. The man confirmed the comments. As expected, they were all passionate.

- └ I'm going. Let's go!
- └ I will participate. Dirty clans!
- └ Go! We have to punish the wicked!
- └ I'm going. Let's leave our mark on the world.
- └ I will say two words. Come, Brothers!
- └ Morals! Assault!
- └ (View more)

A smile flashed on the man's face. As expected from his brothers. He was also unable to tolerate it after watching the video. He declared his participation in the comment input window.

- └ Number 1 Orc User Maguchwi: I am going!!! Come Brothers!!! Shout Bul'tar!!!!

Since the launch of Elder Lord, he was someone who started as a orc and spread the talent and honor of orcs, the number 1 orc magician who loved orcs more than anyone else, Maguchwi!

And the secret orc users community he ran, 'Orc Users Brotherhood'!

Maguchwi and his brothers started running towards Chesswood.



The road leading to Chesswood.

Gordon's wagon was carrying a group of people heading towards Chesswood. Chesswood wasn't a bustling place, but there were those who wanted to relocate because it was simple and peaceful. A single family and their luggage were on the wagon.

The great weather, the shipping costs he received, and the thought of meeting Madame Rachel at the pub meant he would soon arrive at Chesswood. In many ways, this was a great day. Thus, he let out an enthusiastic greeting as he discovered travelers on the road.

"Hey! Hello!"

They saw Gordon. The group seemed to be heading to Chesswood.

"It's good to see you. I am called Gordon. Hey guys, are you heading to Chesswood? It might be narrow, but do you guys want a ride?"

"....."

"Oh, it isn't expensive. How about it? Your legs must hurt."

The travelers started talking among themselves. Gordon grinned. Travelers always had a lot of suspicions, but he was an honest coachman, so he didn't think to cheat them.

"It is one silver for one person. That is a good bargain."

Then he hummed. The sun was bright and the wind was good, so the melody couldn't help emerging. The travelers consulted each other and nodded.

"Okay. It is five silver for five people."

Gordon stopped his wagon and held out his hand. The man who seemed to be the representative approached Gordon and extended his hand.

"Thank you..."

But he gave Gordon a punch, not money.

“Aigoo!”

Gordon rolled off the wagon. He couldn’t understand the sudden attack. Gordon groaned from his position on the ground.

“Kuock, what is this?!”

“.....”

The travelers laughed.

“I was bored on the way, so this is great.”

The white stars on their foreheads were faintly shining.

“Kill all those inside. We will take this wagon and join the clan.”

“I understand.”

Their conversation shocked Gordon. “What is this... Wicked...!”

“Why are you surprised?” The man laughed. “Is this the first time you’ve seen those cursed by the stars?”

Gordon gulped at the words. He just had to meet these bad people at this time. He tried to get up but was kicked by the man again. Gordon crouched on the ground. He thought that it was a great day, but it was actually the opposite.

“Kuuack...”

“Wait here. There must be people inside.”

The man left the party and entered the wagon. As expected, there was a family surrounded by luggage. They didn’t know what was going on and stared blankly at the man. Someone who was clearly a NPC asked, “Who is it? Have we already arrived?”

“Yes.”

Then he pulled out a knife. "You've arrived in hell." The man grinned. The NPCs freaked out. The mother rushed to protect her kids, while the father spread out his hands.

It was a great sight.

"W-We have nothing. Only our lives..."

"Your lives are enough."

"Please, the children..."

"Everybody come out."

The NPCs obeyed. Elder Lord was too realistic, so it was more enjoyable. As the man smiled and pulled them out of the luggage compartment,

"Kuaaaaah!"

A scream was heard.

"What, they're done already?" The man asked. It seemed like the driver was killed. The man tried to continue his actions without a care in the world. But then another scream was heard.

"Keeooook!"

"Keeok!"

"....."

The man's face stiffened. Something was strange. That was the voice of his party member. He hurriedly left the compartment and looked in the direction of the driver.

".....!"

He couldn't believe his eyes. All of his companions had turned into white particles. All four people had died. They weren't at a level where they could be easily beaten, as there was a mixture of high level users raised by the clan.

The man moved his gaze.

Gordon was looking at him from over the bodies of his party members, a sharp sword brightly gleaming in his hand. As the man looked stunned, Gordon laughed and swept away the long bangs.

“.....!”

The man’s mouth gaped open. There was a white star shining on Gordon’s forehead. The man flinched back. Gordon waved the tip of his sword and approached. He had an unimaginably cruel expression on his face.

“Why are you surprised?”

Gordon laughed coldly.

“Is this the first time you’ve seen a roleplayer?”

# **CHAPTER 46**

## **A FIRE IN THE SKY (1)**

---

The chiefs decided to hold the battle at Edelweiss Village in Chesswood in an attempt to face the clans who were dividing and occupying the area. The response was swift. The clans joined together, but the residents were locked in the center of Chesswood and had built a form line of defense.

“Orc brother should act more moderately,” Jeremy said.

“I’m okay.”

“Then don’t fight so crudely.”

Jeremy and Blackmore had retreated safely from the battle of Dandelion Village, but Crockta had fought until the end. He had barely managed to escape thanks to Laney, and now all of Chesswood knew his name. The orc warrior who risked his life fighting for them!

Jeremy’s eyes had turned red because he had thought Crockta was dead until he returned. He acted grumpy but was surprisingly cheerful.

Laney had disappeared. Crockta thought that she was probably somewhere filming this very scene.

The video she uploaded got an explosive reaction.

The Internet’s public opinion had now turned against the clans, including the Thawing Balhae Clan. People were enthusiastic about the drama. The NPCs were inhabitants who couldn’t fight the users massacring them, and the orc who fought for the people was a hero.

The end of the battle and the orc’s fate was unknown, but there was the shared opinion of wanting to help Chesswood. There were those who actually went to Chesswood.

But Crockta didn’t expect that much. In any case, the world was about victory. In the world of the strong, victory couldn’t be achieved through public opinion and

compassion alone. Even if some of them came to help, it wouldn't be enough to go against Thawing Balhae and the other clans.

Crcokta examined the defenses from a high place.

All of the villagers who could fight were gathered in Edelweiss Village. Now it was a siege. Outside of the village, the clan users seemed to be scouting this place. They were also gathering. They would destroy the village and then scatter after getting what they wanted. The big clans couldn't ignore the ongoing criticisms of the public.

"They are coming," a villager said.

Crockta and Jeremy looked in that direction. The armies of the clans were slowly approaching. Massive. There were many novice users, but there were also high level users with good equipment scattered among them.

"They are coming from behind." The other side also announced the approach of the clans.

Blackmore's uncle, the former village chief, frowned. The enemies just now appearing were split into four groups, according to the words of Crockta the orc. They were trying to invade Edelweiss from four different directions.

Ingram was troubled. The villagers were far from combatants. Ingram looked over the village's line of defense. Everyone was trying their best, but it couldn't help but look shabby since they didn't have professional training.

He called his nephew Blackmore and two others over.

"They came."

Blackmore had a dark expression ever since he fought in the battle at Dandelion Village. He missed the peace of Chesswood and came back despite his past sins, only to find that the village was on the verge of collapse. He was forced to flee despite seeing many villagers killed in front of him.

Should he have fought to the end like the orc Crockta?

Ingram knew his heart and patted Blackmore's shoulder. "Blackmore, Crockta, and Jeremy. Right now, you are the people most familiar with fighting in the village."

Crockta nodded.

Ingram continued, "The enemy is moving forward in four places. Take one direction each and fight there."

"Is it really okay?" Crockta asked.

He wondered if it would be better to reduce the defense lines even further. The defense line could break if they fought in all four directions. Ingram shook his head.

"The residents have already lost so much."

"....."

"This is the last bastion. Please understand."

It was for this reason that the people of Chesswood had gathered here. In the end, the villages that they threw away were burned and destroyed.

The villages of Chesswood included: the slaughtered Dandelion Village, Black Rose Village, Chrysanthemum Village, Cactus Village, Camellia Village, Daffodil, Saffron, Morning Glory, Sunflower, etc. They were all destroyed.

If the battle was pushed to Edelweiss, then they really wouldn't have anything left for them.

Crockta nodded at Ingram's determined face.

He was a user, so he often overlooked their hearts. For all of them, this was a real problem. Their nests were destroyed, their friends had died, and their families were slaughtered. It was a disaster without notice. Due to the selfishness of their enemies, they lost everything.

Crockta's eyes cooled. He had also lost important relationships due to the Thawing Balhae Clan. He completely understood their hearts. But if he was asked if they could win this fight, it would be difficult to answer. Crockta had barely come back alive, thanks to Laney. More powerful users like Higashi would appear.

The odds of success had increased to 1%, but they were still ridiculous odds. But he didn't give up.

Crockta touched the handle of his greatsword. The weight and grip of Ogre Slayer was now completely familiar in his hand.

Numerous people, people who didn't know how to fight, took up weapons to protect their homes and families. They couldn't even live again after death. Once their necks were sliced, they were gone from the world forever.

What about Crockta? How shameful would it be if he, a user, gave up first. How could he step back in front of Ingram and Blackmore's determined faces?

"I understand."

Crockta turned his head. The villagers were nervous. The men held weapons and took deep breaths while the women tried to support them as much as possible. In the center were the children, the elderly, and the sick who were praying for the return of their families.

"Crockta, please take care of the southwest."

"Yes."

"Blackmore will take the northeast and..."

Jeremy, Blackmore, Ingram, and Crockta scattered in four different directions. The moment they wished each other luck, the alarm horn rang out.

"An attack! The attack has begun!"

"To your locations!"

"Go back to your locations!"

War.

They exchanged glances and ran to their assigned area. The villagers also ran to their respective locations, picking up their weapons and preparing for battle. Hastily fired arrows flew in the air towards the clan members; however, they were blocked by the opponent's defense wall, failing to cause damage.

On the other hand, flames appeared in the air and were launched towards the

villagers' defense lines.

The magicians' bombardment!

There were those who could use magic on Chesswood's side, but they weren't raised for battle like the clans' users. One of the village chiefs who learned magic deployed a shield, but it was soon broken by the repeated bombardment of the users.

"Aaack!"

Those who were caught by the flames rolled across the ground. The flames spread. The arrows of the clan poured over the collapsed lines and the members rushed towards the residents.

He couldn't leave them alone.

Crockta pulled out his greatsword. The villagers were groaning from their injuries, some of them so terrified that they couldn't hold their weapons properly.

Crockta took a deep breath. War was dependent on morale. Crockta yelled towards the sky with all his might, just like a lion's roar.

"Bul'tarrr——!"

A call that shook the battlefield! It was an intense battle cry that shook the earth and caused the whole army to flinch.

[Your roar filled with killing intent has terrified the army soldiers.]

[Your battle shout is now more than just a threat.]

[Rare grade skill, Crushing Roar (Rare) has been acquired.]

The message windows popped up. It seemed like a greater force was rising from his body. Crockta didn't capture it. Rather, he let it explode towards the enemy again.

“Show the cost of blood to the invaders——!”

The users blocked their ears at the ensuing roar. The shout was tremendous enough to shatter windows. It elicited fear in the enemies, and invoked an unbreakable fighting spirit in his allies. The residents remembered how to hold their weapons thanks to Crockta’s intense presence.

His battle cry. The enemies were invaders. They were demons that came to trample their homes, friends and families. No matter how unsophisticated the farmers, they realized that they would have to swing their fists. They needed to raise a sword towards those who wanted to kill their families.

The residents shouted in response to Crockta.

“Kill all the bastards!”

“Save the village and our families!”

“Chesswood is ours!”

The inhabitants sprinted towards the enemy, with Crockta leading the charge. Crockta was in the front as he hit the enemy’s camp.

Their formations shook. Crockta’s greatsword broke the army’s formation. The enemies’ heads flew and blood spurted. Crockta’s battle shout once again crushed the enemy’s morale.

“Bul’tarrr——!”



Chesswood was better than he thought.

But objectively, the power difference was obvious.

Jeremy glanced around. He heard the cries of Crockta, the orc brother who was running around like crazy. He truly was too energetic. He was a monster who would continue to grow stronger in battle.

But that was a matter for over there.

“Not good...”

Jeremy stabbed his opponent’s neck and stepped back.

This place was already a melee frenzy. It wasn’t long before the enemies and allies mixed together. Gradually, the number of corpses increased. The eyes of the dead villagers were still filled with resentment towards the enemy.

“Dammit...”

He was only accompanying Crockta because of Derek, but he couldn’t help being shaken by the awful sight. Those who were cursed by the stars.

“Disgusting scum...”

Jeremy wasn’t a good man, he was well aware of this. He didn’t have any sentimental aspects, and worked ultimately for his and Derek’s benefits. But those guys were beyond wicked, like demons.

“Jane... Jane...”

One dying resident was calling the name of his lover. It was hopeless, since his body had been split apart at the waist. His hollow eyes captured Jeremy.

“Jane...”

“.....”

It was that name.

Jane. Jeremy grasped his sword. He also knew a Jane, the name of an old lover. She was living well now. There were countless Janes in the world who were someone else’s lover, just like this man loved a Jane.

That’s it. Why did he feel dirty?

“Fuck.”

He volunteered for nothing. He didn’t follow Crockta. He felt too much when he was with this brother. Yes, just like that time. When Hoyt and Crockta were standing

together, Jeremy had felt an unknown feeling.

Boss Derek. The boss also felt this way for the first time.

What should Jeremy do? Those who were cursed by the stars were approaching. More residents on the front lines were dying. It was time to run away.

Why couldn't he take a step back? Jeremy looked back. Edelweiss Village was visible and the frightened faces of the children could be seen in the windows. He saw residents struggling even as they collapsed.

"Fuck."

At that moment, Jeremy fell back from a strong shock. Jeremy barely caught himself in time. A man was visible. It was the man called Higashi, the one who brought Crockta to the brink of death. He was wearing dazzling and expensive armor while holding a sword and shield.

Jeremy whistled. "You came now. You're later, Brother."

Higashi studied him with an unknown smile. "NPCs truly seem real."

Those cursed by the stars called people a strange term, NPCs. He wasn't sure why, but Jeremy felt dirty every time he heard it. There was a reason why they were called the cursed. They were cursed and committed bad deeds without any care in the world.

He wanted to ask. "Brother, I was wondering something." Jeremy raised his sword. "Why are you attacking this place?"

He heard that it was for achievements, but it wasn't funny that the cursed people were trying to get rid of their curse through evil deeds. They shouldn't kill innocent people just to resolve their curse.

Higashi laughed. "It is annoying to explain, so just know this."

"What is it?"

"If you understand how trivial the reason is, you will become angry." Those with an artificial intelligence were really funny. They didn't even know that they were born for the sake of humans playing a game. Higashi sniggered.

Jeremy saw Higashi's smiling face. A trivial reason. 'I see.' Jeremy started laughing. He couldn't help laughing. Higashi and Jeremy looked at each other and laughed.

"Yes, it is accurate. Even though I didn't hear your reason, I can feel a fire burning inside me. It is already too hard to say how upset I am." Jeremy said.

"What if the fire emerges?"

"What if." At that moment, Jeremy moved like the wind. "I'm going to kill you, you fucker!"

"Hahahat!"

The two exchanged blows. Jeremy's sword stabbed at Higashi's gaps, but they were all blocked by the shield.

"Cough!"

Jeremy was wary of Higashi's one handed sword, but ended up being hit by the shield. Jeremy flew into the air and rolled across the ground.

"Kuheok..."

So painful. How did that orc brother endure this? How did he endure such pain? Jeremy barely managed to raise his body. Blood flowed from his mouth. His body structure was too different from an orc. Jeremy smiled again as he looked at his sword and then shook it.

"You're not running away? Like the previous time?" Higashi asked.

"Yes."

He should run away but...

His body bent towards the front. He couldn't do this.

Why did he follow that orc? He tried to recover his spirit, but then Higashi approached. The sword penetrated Jeremy's stomach.

".....!"

He fell to his knees. Blood gushed out from the wound in his abdomen. Jeremy's head hit the ground. He could see Higashi's legs slowly moving away in the corner of his vision.

"I have no more time to play today."

"...Cough, puhuhu."

Jeremy couldn't help laughing.

Death, he had never thought about it. Was death coming this way? Death was now passing close to life. It wasn't strange that he died from a sword. His sword was covered with the blood of many, and not all of them died so easily.

Anyway, life and death were both fleeting. Now it was his turn.

Jeremy closed his eyes.

He wouldn't be subservient. There was no need to regret it. Life was rough, so he should calmly accept his death. Embrace it.

.....

His vision became dark. In the darkness, something fluttered.

*...Dead.*

Someone spoke. It was an eerie voice.

*...Do you know death?*

*....I have never witnessed an irreversible one.*

Jeremy wanted to open his eyes, but there was no sensation at all, like his body had disappeared. Only his consciousness floated in this deep darkness. At that moment, a terrible scream coming from the Abyss shook him.

It was terrible. It was a vicious cry that seemed to scrap against his soul. His heart seemed to stop. The voice continued to whisper.

*...It isn't your time yet.*

*...Then I will be waiting.*

The horrible scream constantly echoed around him as he rose in the darkness.

Terrible fear. He had to escape. He wanted to get away. Every part of his body was twisting from fear.

He opened his eyes.

“...Cough!”

Then he coughed up blood. Black blood was scattered on the floor.

He wasn't dead yet. He moved his gaze.

“.....!”

Oh my god. He couldn't believe his eyes. It was impossible.

One, two, they were standing up. The dead residents were rising again. Even Higashi didn't understand this situation as he fell back. Countless bodies were revived again as an unknown black energy covered their bodies.

The astonished clan members swung their weapons at the corpses, but their attacks couldn't pierce the black energy.

Jeremy turned his head. From far away, someone was slowly walking towards them. On the man's back, there was a gigantic darkness that resembled the wings of a demon with the tongue of a snake.

Jeremy had heard about this.

The worst beings. The demons' spokesmen who brought hell to life.

“Necromancer...”

The middle-aged man carrying the hellish darkness stood in front of them. His ominous eyes scanned the area. And he declared.

“I am the wine man, Kim Chul... no, Iron.”

He raised his hand. The corpses started to surround the enemies like beings from hell.

“I came here to punish the people who are like rice wine.”

# CHAPTER 47

## A FIRE IN THE SKY (2)

---

The dead rose and struck the users. Higashi cut at the people coming towards him, but they just rose up again and stretched out bloody hands to him. Higashi freaked out and sliced apart their bodies.

He looked around. The clan members were also lost due to this bizarre sight. They slaughtered the dead for a second time. Cutting them in the abdomen didn't kill them. Instead, they kept staring with resentful eyes as they used their broken bones as their weapons.

It was a hell-like pandemonium.

Higashi looked at the man who was the source of all this. The middle-aged man, the necromancer named Iron. A black haze extended from his body to dominate the battlefield. Higashi felt an instinctive fear towards him. Necromancy was a strength that could be called the antithesis of life.

But as the Yamato Clan's vice-leader and ranker, he couldn't back off. As the screams of his clan members were heard behind him, Higashi rushed to Iron. It was the typical attack using the sword and the shield!

But he overlooked that his opponent wasn't a warrior.

The darkness slithered around his neck, as a cold chill went down his spine, surrounding him. Something was wrong.

*Jjejeok.*

He was thrown back as he heard a sound. The sky and ground turned upside down. Higashi couldn't think. He tried to get up, but his eyes were ringing and he couldn't find his center. He relied on his sword as his body staggered.

Iron stretched out hands towards him.

"Don't resist. You will regret it."

It was a solemn declaration. And it was serious. If Higashi resisted any longer, then he would see terrible things.

Iron was the worst type of necromancer, the one with the presence of a demon. He contracted with an entity that should not be called unto the lands. This was why he hadn't connected to Elder Lord for a while. He was different from the other necromancers, who only raised the dead.

He wasn't a ranker, but he contracted with a powerful demon who could make even rankers kneel. There was a price for that great power, which was to pay compensation to the demon.

Demogorgon!

"Life to death, laughter to screaming."

Iron's body soon escaped from his control. The lion of hell who borrowed his body opened his mouth, "There are so many of them. Those cursed by the stars, what a funny joke."

The demon occupying Iron's body giggled. Iron's body no longer followed his control. His mind was locked in his body and he felt all sensations without any filters. Even pain.

"It feels good to meet you again after a long wait, Contractor."

He scratched at Iron's chest with his fingertips. The demon's punishment. Iron swallowed down the pain. He had signed with a being that shouldn't have existed in the game. People protested several times to Elder Lord Corporation, but they ignored it, saying it was an element of the game.

An evil demon that took away control from the user! Demogorgon told Iron, "You must've been doing well."

Iron inwardly cursed before replying, "Yes yes! That's correct. Demogorgon! I wanted you to have peace! Hahat."

"Well, I guess you have been doing fine."

"It is all thanks to Demogorgon. I've been so busy, but I always thought about

Demogorgon. Hahat! Now I feel like a fish in the water!"

"As expected from my trusty contractor. Kukahahaha!"

"Were you expecting anything else? Kukaka!"

That's right. It was one reason why Iron was able to deal with a high ranking demon. The worldly wisdom of a sales department manager!

He had the skill 'Sales Force (Essence)!' Thanks to this skill, Iron was able to deal with the demon. Even though there was a big side effect of losing control, the demon helped Iron out with great power.

"Yes, it has been a while, so I will listen to what my contractor wants. What is your reason for calling me? Do you want the advent of hell? Do you want to recreate souls by mixing together life and death?"

"Hah... Is such a thing possible? As always, Demogorgon's strength and talent is something I can only admire. Hahahahat! But these people deserve more than that. I want them to never come to this place again."

"Kukakakaka! I see. Is that enough?"

"There is no need to use a knife to catch a mouse. Furthermore, Demogorgon isn't a knife, but a dragon. No, they don't deserve the final weapon that will destroy this world! They are unworthy of it. Please~ give this present to me! Yes!"

"Kukakakakaka!"

Demogorgon burst out laughing. How long had it been since he had a contractor who was such a good fit? Demogorgon smirked and looked at all the enemies in front of him.

On the other hand, horror gripped Higashi. The necromancer was mumbling to himself like he was crazy. Iron looked at Higashi. "You."

".....!"

"Do you know?"

Higashi raised his sword and shield as he asked, "What do you mean?"

"What comes without sound, tears apart your life, and isn't reversible?"

A voice spoke in Higashi's ears.

'... Death.'

Higashi freaked out and turned his body, but there was nothing there. He flinched back. The voice whispered in his ear again.

'... The eternal sinking'

Higashi blocked his ears. He looked around. Iron couldn't be seen. There was nobody. There were only the dead bodies and the corpses of the clan members on the floor.

'... Do you want to know it?'

Something touched his spine. It was under his skin. The demon's hand touched his skin, muscles, and nervous system. Higashi flopped down. He couldn't breathe. The sky was in front of him. A dark curtain started to descend from the sky.

'... I'm going to show you.'

His vision became dark.



Raizen, master of the Napoleon Clan and ranker, couldn't believe it.

Obviously, it was very easy. The four clans allied in order to decimate an unknown village. Once they trampled on the village and raised the level of their new clan members, they would create a base here to gain more wealth and power.

An easy and efficient operation. Everything had gone as planned. However, the existence of these guys wasn't drawn in the nice blueprint.

"Warriors! Too cool! The best!" The elf female trembled and made a fuss.

"Hahaha. As expected of the warrior chosen by the great sage." A magician with a long

beard nodded.

"I'm the only one without a great role." A man holding a sword shrugged at his colleagues' remarks.

Then warrior Bob, the man who was being praised by everyone, lifted his shining sword. "My sword, X-Geiger is howling! For justice!"

Raizen now realized it.

These crazy guys. They were crazy role-playing lovers. He didn't want to get involved with crazy people like this. But the problem was that the crazy people weren't just joking around when it came to strength.

"That guy's eyes! They are eyes steeped in evil!"

"We'll must discipline them."

"The wise sage can see everything."

No, don't come over you crazy people.

Raizen ran around. After the fight began, the front line started to be pushed back. The middle-aged man who seemed to be the leader worked hard to encourage the residents, but the clan gradually drove them back. The moment the clan was about to purge the villagers with powerful ranged magic...

All of a sudden, these people appeared and attacked. The warrior's sword moved through all air, and all of the gathered magic power was scattered. A vacuum that drew in all the magic power in the area! They exhibited huge strength and instantly stopped the Napoleon Clan's march.

An unexpected variable. However, it wasn't impossible.

"Everybody gather here! Catch these guys!"

Raizen screamed and stepped back. The clan members recognized the instructions and flocked to his side. No matter how strong the opponents were, they were outnumbered.

The men and woman in the group of four were nervous. Raizen laughed. The group couldn't deal with so many clan members.

It was at that moment. The villagers who didn't know English soon realized that the group were allies and moved forward. Numerous residents stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the group.

Raizen's face distorted again.

"We will fight together!" The villagers held farm equipment and rusty weapons. However, determination shone in their eyes. This was their village. They would protect it themselves.

The Napoleon Clan was stunned.

"How about it, didn't we do well coming here?"

"Yes."

"The best stage."

The four roleplayers, F4, exchanged glances as they stood with the residents. It felt good. No, it was a good thing. The best.

It had been a long time. The four of them had created and destroyed worlds. They rolled the dice for a long time, but had felt empty.

They came here to the world of Elder Lord because they knew the reason why. Those who stood with them. Having companions stand next to them was required on adventures. It wasn't a fiction that the master of the dice created, but a reality where their allies breathed, thought, cried, laughed, and felt anger. A party always needed some allies, and today, they were standing as heroes to the people who needed them.

Bob raised his sword.

"Now! My sword X-Geiger! My sword doesn't drink water, nor alcohol, nor the blood of the enemy!"

"...Is this necessary?"

Elia whispered as Bob started talking nonsense. But Bob's mood was the best. Thus, Bob couldn't stop anymore.

"What does my sword need?"

Elia, Joseph and Gary laughed. It was obvious what Bob was going to shout next. The line that they always told him not to say. The very thing that caused them to cringe in embarrassment. But they would accept it today.

"Justice!"

"Justice!"

"Justiceeee!"

"Just- ice!"

The roleplayers shouted at the same time. Raizen saw the funny scene, but he couldn't laugh. It was because they unleashed a wild assault.



Crockta gasped for breath, wielding his greatsword like crazy.

But the enemies didn't give up. He trampled the enemies, but more enemies appeared.

Moreover, several influential figures were acting to keep Crockta in check. Crockta tried to help the inhabitants, but the enemies kept Crockta away of them. He could only watch as the residents were slaughtered.

Crockta thought despairingly. Insufficient. His power was lacking. More power was needed.

Crockta rushed again, but was blocked by several people. He wielded his greatsword at their defense. He was able to slash at one user; but at the same time, he received multiple wounds on his body. Blood and flesh were scattered onto the floor.

Crockta fell to his knees.

"Don't be upset, Orc." They said with a laugh.

Crockta closed his eyes. He still had power left. He grabbed his greatsword. It was only up to here, but it was still good. He had done his best. It couldn't be helped.

However, he would stamp it clearly. What an orc was.

Crockta opened his eyes. He prepared for his last hurrah.

It was at that moment.

*Dudududududu.*

The earth shook.

“.....?”

Everyone on the battlefield gazed at a distant place. Dust had risen up.

“...W-What?”

Crockta also lifted his head. The earth was ringing.

*Dudududududu.*

A crowd of people were rushing from the horizon towards this place.

*Dudududududu.*

Everyone looked at them. The distance narrowed. The earth shook like there was an earthquake.

*Dudududududu!*

# **CHAPTER 48**

## **A FIRE IN THE SKY (3)**

---

*Dududududu!*

“T-This is...!”

By the time the crowd became close enough to see, it was already too late. The orc squads destroyed the formation with a tank-like assault. A user's head flew through the air. The orc's huge weapons took the enemy's heads off. Terrible weapons such as halberds, double-edged axes, twin axes, and hammers tore all over the place.

“W-What?”

Orc troops suddenly appeared! They started to devastate the front lines. Crockta could see shining white stars on their foreheads.

He could guess the situation. Laughter emerged.

The video shot by Laney in Dandelion Village seemed to have called them. He had stimulated the fighting spirits of the enthusiasts who played as orcs. The fires of hope rose again at the unexpected appearance.

The orc's battle cry rang out loudly.

“Brothers! Don't show any mercy!”

An orc shaman caught a user's neck with his bare hands, lightning emerging from his hands. The tremendous lightning storm! The enemy became a charred body. He threw it towards the enemies and roared.

“Bul'tarrrr!”

How long had it been since Crockta heard that battle cry? Something boiled up in Crockta's chest. Crockta responded.

“Bul'tarrr——!”

He met the gaze of the other orc.

*Ssik*. They exchanged glances. Then the other orcs started yelling. Their battle cries dominated the battlefield like those of wild beasts.

The villagers could only watch with stunned expressions. The exciting orcs suddenly appeared! Every time they wielded a weapon, enemies fell. The residents also raised their weapons. They didn't know what was going on, but orcs were here. They could win.

They didn't know what it meant, but they also participated by shouting the orc's battle cry.

“Bul’tar!”

Now the battlefield was a swirl of chaos. Humans vs humans, orcs vs humans, they all mixed together and aimed weapons at each other. People became dead bodies or turned into white particles. It wouldn't stop until one of the two sides died!

There was also considerable resistance from the clan. The high levels and rankers confronted the surprise attack.

“Dirty orc scum...!”

“I wash more often than you!”

The second lord of the Orc Users Brotherhood founded by Maguchwi, the No.2 orc user Kuwakta, focused his spirit.

He was originally a natural landscape photographer who loved beautiful nature, flora, and fauna. After accidentally starting the game, he became immersed in the magnificent scenery of Elder Lord that couldn't be seen anywhere else. Therefore, he didn't become an orc warrior or shaman.

Nature's friend! Orc Druid!

“Phoenix's Possession!”

He used a skill. While exploring the world of Elder Lord, he had met a powerful and mysterious being.

Blazing wings stretched out behind his back, his hands becoming flaming phoenix claws. Every time he waved his limbs, flames moved around him and ate at the bodies of the enemies, effectively killing them.

“This is crazy!”

A mystic summoned a water spirit, but the phoenix around Kuwakta bit at it. The mystic that summoned it suffered at the same time. The water spirit turned into vapor and disappeared into the air.

“Water is burning...?”

The mystic flopped down. Kuwakta asked with the phoenix’s claws at their neck, “What do you call that spirit?”

“What...?”

“Do you know the name of that spirit?”

“.....!”

“You just call it a spirit. You don’t even know their names.” Kuwakta’s claws bit into the mystic’s neck. The body of the mystic started to burn. “Spirits aren’t tools, but friends. Your lack of knowledge is the cause of your defeat.”

“That, friends...” The mystic nodded within the fire. He lost, but somehow he felt refreshed.

The druid removed his hand as the body of the mystic became distorted by the flames. The mystic stared at the orc druid until his eyeballs burned. It was great. He would remember this the next time he met the druid.

The mystic smiled. His vision was cut off and his consciousness faded away. Immediately before his connection was cut off, the orc druid’s faint cry was heard.

“Let’s fight! Phoenix! Phoenix, what are you doing? Phoenix ohh!”

“.....?”

Meanwhile, Crockta was confronting a ranker. He joined forces with other orcs to

knock down the ranker. The ranker looked at his missing lower body and muttered like he couldn't believe his defeat.

"Shit... Losing to orcs..."

"What else do you expect when you pick weak NPCs to level up?"

The moment that the orc who allied with Crockta was about to hit the ranker's neck...

"Weak NPCs? Didn't we kill your favourite Lenox? Kuku..."

".....!"

Warrior Instructor Lenox was a famous NPC among the orc users as well. Those who killed him felt pride. They were the Thawing Balhae Clan.

Crockta realized that the users in this area were from the Thawing Balhae Clan. His eyes changed. The orc user who fought with him steadily kicked the face of the ranker. The body without a lower half rolled across the ground and started to slowly fade into white particles.

After the ranker's death, Crockta scanned in front of him.

The traitor Grom, who was called Hyunchul, would surely be here. He heard the clan member saying that they would raise him up. The reason for this massacre was that they were trying to nurture the low-level clan members.

Crockta plunged back into the front lines. He approached a place that was filled with Thawing Balhae members and shouted, "Hyunchul!"

No one answered. Crockta stabbed a user in the abdomen with his greatsword and continued searching. Then he shouted again, "Hyunchul! What are you doing?"

A user suddenly looked around. Crockta laughed. Fortunately, he hadn't died yet. Crockta approached him while pretending to know nothing. It was a human male character, the preferred warrior character holding a sword and shield. The face was handsome, due to the customization feature of Elder Lord.

This was the current appearance of Hyunchul, he who sold out Lenox and the orc warriors to the humans. Crockta made note of his appearance. Then he ran around.

He found something that was like a rope. Even though the battle in Chesswood was urgent, he would make it so that Hyunchul couldn't play the game anymore.

But at that moment, the double-edged blade of an axe appeared behind Hyunchul's back. Hyunchul was defenseless.

Crockta sighed.

Hyunchul was weak after becoming a human. As he watched Hyunchul's head being split apart by the axe, Crockta pledged the following. Rather, this was better. It would be better to do it after Hyunchul grew some more. That way, his despair would be greater if the character that he raised to a high level was trampled on.

Hyunchul's body was vertically split in half. Crockta approached. Hyunchul's body turned white. Crockta spat on the white particles.



A user's blade cut Blackmore. Blood poured out.

"....."

Blackmore pierced the opponent's neck with his spear, who collapsed with blood bubbling in his mouth. Blackmore pulled out the spear and stepped back.

He scanned the situation. The opponents were advancing systematically in a maintained formation. Magical flames fell from the sky. The residents screamed for help as they were engulfed in flames. Regardless of the confusion on the battlefield, the enemies were steadfastly moving.

It was disadvantageous. These guys weren't comparable to those who had been in Dandelion Village. They made the right decisions. It was doubtful that an individual could change the situation.

Since the start of the fight, Blackmore had felt that it was difficult. He foresaw a defeat in this battle. The power gap was severe. Was there any other place to deal with it? Blackmore shook his head. Unless there was a god's help, it would be the same as here.

Blackmore thought about fleeing. But his legs kept heading towards the front.

He laughed. Why was his body heading forward? The battle of Dandelion Village entered his mind. He had run away, but the orc Crockta had risked his life for the villages, despite it not being his hometown. Blackmore felt ashamed as he saw it.

Chesswood, a collection of beautiful and simple villages. He had been a cancer that harmed the atmosphere of this place. There was a woman who he tried to pretend with, but even she became hurt and left him. After that, he became blinded and attacked indiscriminately. When he recovered and looked around, all he could see was hurt and devastation.

Now it was time to pay that back. Poison must be burned with poison.

The residents were fleeing. Blackmore nodded. There should be some who survived. There was no need for everyone to die. Blackmore blocked the enemies that were pursuing them.

Blackmore hummed, "I have travelled to many places in the world. Always looking for new things..."

He brandished his spear. Blood splattered. There was a bad taste in his mouth. Blackmore giggled and continued the melody again. "But I've realized. I had already found the things I was looking for..."

The enemies chased after the fleeing villagers. Blackmore rushed between them. The attacks of the invaders poured towards Blackmore's body. Some were blocked, while others hit. He spat out the blood in his mouth as the eyes of the enemies shook. Blackmore laughed and pointed his spear at them.

More were blocked and hit.

"Cough!"

The attacks of the enemies aimed at Blackmore again. This time he couldn't stop them. Blackmore stepped back, his knees folding. His blood soaked into the ground.

He raised his head. Those guys were approaching. He couldn't help laughing.

Ah, the buzzing in his head. 'Dancing under the moonlight, singing in the rain.'

"Oh, I'm happy to be back home..."

For a moment, Blackmore's spear moved explosively. The enemy was unable to cope with the sudden onslaught and was pierced in the stomach. He turned into white particles.

The cursed people. Why did they come here?

Blackmore found the next enemy with his spear.

"Laughing under the sun and running along the road..."

*Puok.*

Blackmore looked down at his chest. The end of a sword had pierced through the flesh. Sharp. It was no wonder that it penetrated his body. Blackmore laughed. Blood flowed down from his mouth.

'Bitch, you stabbed a little too late.'

He still had a few words left. His vision blurred. The ground was up and the sky was down. He closed his eyes as the world shook. What were the last lyrics? His consciousness gradually faded away.

The world was dark.

'Ah! I'm happy to be back home!'

# **CHAPTER 49**

## **FALLEN GOD**

---

Gordon got off his wagon.

It was incomprehensible. He knew that Chesswood was a beautiful village.

“What is all this...?”

The settlers he picked up also looked around in bewilderment. This wasn't the Chesswood that they had decided to move to. The area was burned to the ground and in ruins. There were bodies all over the place. The father covered his children's eyes and sent them back to the luggage compartment with his wife.

“Oh my god. What is going on...?”

“It is like it seems.”

The father's attitude had become cautious ever since he witnessed Gordon killing the attackers. He asked, “I'm sorry but... Can you take us a little further?”

They had decided to settle on Dandelion Village, but they had relatives living in the other villages of Chesswood. However, there were ruins everywhere. It was so confusing that they didn't even know how to respond. First, they had to go to the other villages in Chesswood to figure out what was going on.

“What the hell is going on...?”

“Wait a bit.”

Gordon's ears heard something, his keen senses picking up the noise of a battlefield in the distance. His eyes were cold. It was in the direction of Edelweiss Village in the center of Chesswood. Gordon placed a hand on the hilt of his sword.

“.....?”

The father became nervous about Gordon's sword. Gordon raised both hands and

laughed.

"Haha. Please wait here. I will go ahead and see what is going on. If there is an incident..."

"Yes..."

"Don't worry. I will just go and see the situation." Gordon untied one of the four horses pulling the wagon. After putting on a saddle, he got on the horse. "Rest in the wagon. I'll be back quickly."

"Yes. Thank you."

Gordon moved. First of all, he headed to an inn located on the outskirts of Azalea Village. It was where Rachel was, but her inn had already been razed into the ground. Among the broken buildings, unidentified bodies were scattered.

"....."

She wasn't his lover. They were closer than friends, but it wasn't an intimate relationship. However, he couldn't see that bright smile anymore.

Gordon continued onwards. His keen hearing continued to grasp the noise of the distant battlefield. He kicked the horse and started running again. He passed Chrysanthemum Village beyond Dandelion Village. It was also in ruins.

Beyond Chrysanthemum Village was Myrtle Village. All ruins.

Then he witnessed the fighting of the army that was trying to penetrate Edelweiss. War. It was a mess of death and killing. Gordon saw the white stars on the foreheads of the invaders and was able to understand everything.

Gordon's finger stroked the handle of his sword. They didn't know anything. He got off his horse and tied it up in a safe place. The horse was scared by the noise from the battlefield. He swept the horse's man away and placed his forehead against its brow.

"Wait here quietly. I'll be back."

The horse looked at Gordon, who in turn tapped its cheek.

“Don’t worry.”

Then he headed to the front lines. The residents of Elder Lord were fleeing from the users. Gordon approached a user and stabbed him in the neck. No one noticed Gordon’s presence. The user gradually changed into white particles.

“But I’ve realized. I had already found the things I was looking for...”

He suddenly heard a song. Gordon raised his head. He discovered a man holding a spear. The man was bloody all over as he blocked the users. He smiled when he saw the residents running away. As if he was the patron saint of this place, he stopped the enemies.

The man continued singing. Gordon realized that the man was determined to die. He had the eyes of a person who had abandoned life. A lot of things must’ve happened in order for a human to neglect living. Nobody could judge the stories that must be woven around that man.

The invaders here wouldn’t have consideration for such things. Gordon cut down users as he walked over to the man. He noticed the enemy behind him. Gordon’s blade pierced the user’s neck.

“Keooo...”

“You can’t see it...”

Gordon’s blade was like light itself. However, there was still a thick line between him and the man with the spear. Despite Gordon’s efforts, the man was stabbed in the abdomen.

The song that he was singing stopped. What were the lyrics was he trying to sing?

Another life experienced an irreversible death. It was a sad day. Gordon looked up at the sky.

If a child pulled the trigger, it wasn’t the fault of the child, but the fault of the adult. The adult who placed the gun in the child’s hand, without explaining anything. He could understand it in his head.

But what about the child’s punishment? The bullet fired from the gun had taken

someone's life.

[Your assimilation rate has risen.]

[Assimilation rate has reached the limit set.]

[Current assimilation rate: 89%]

Gordon wielded his sword. A dazzling darkness covered the battlefield.

“.....!”

The front line was broken. The surrounding area had been cut in the shape of a fan.

A massacre committed by a cold soldier. The battlefield became quiet. Gordon walked steadily. Now all eyes on the battlefield were looking at Gordon. Their faces were shocked, like they didn't understand what had happened.

Some strong players blocked Gordon. They were breathing nervously and seemed tense as they spoke to each other.

“Appearing suddenly like this. What is your name and class?”

“Where did this guy...”

The strongest person among them spoke, “Pincer attack. Do it slowly.”

“Yes Brother.”

“Brother is a ranker as well. We can win.”

The fiver users, including the ranker, surrounded Gordon. Every one of them seemed to have a high level. Gordon laughed. Then he wielded his sword again.

The world stopped. His blade moved slowly, but the opponents failed to avoid it. This moment seemed to last forever to the enemy. Gordon's sword broke the laws of the

world and swept over the enemies. It was a sword that cut the space and converged on the enemy.

Slowly. Carefully. The blade met skin. Five heads simultaneously flew through the air.

“.....!”

The moment the fifth head was completely separated from the body, the world returned to its original state. Fountains of blood rose from five necks at the same time.

Everyone was shocked. The ranker and powerhouses that they were so proud of had fallen at the same time. They couldn't even see what had happened. The bodies turned into white particles. Gordon went forward. The enemies retreated.

The brand on their forehead was stinging. The brand whispered to him.

.....

.....

That desolate voice. Gordon smiled as he killed another person.

It was unfair. They didn't know anything about the curse of the stars as they casually went around committing terrible sins. He would stab their ignorant selves with this sword.



Crockta ran towards the northeast front. It was Blackmore's battlefield.

In the other battlefields, armed forces had appeared like a miracle and created victory. However, Blackmore's battlefield was the only one where they received news that the residents were retreating. Crockta achieved the first victory and headed to the northeast front.

“.....!”

But the only thing visible was bodies. Both allies and enemies were dead. There was only one person standing.

“...You?”

Crockta approached him. The man had his head bowed while covered in blood and flesh. Crockta’s heart pounded. He felt an unknown feeling without knowing why. It felt like he was familiar with this person.

The man raised his head.

“.....”

The man met Crockta’s gaze.

“You?” Crockta asked. The man’s eyes widened slightly and he scrutinized Crockta. He stopped at the bandana covering Crockta’s forehead.

The man asked a question instead of answering, “What is your name?”

Crockta realized that this man was the one who killed all the enemies here. He was able to tell just by meeting the man’s eyes.

“Crockta.”

“Crockta...”

The man looked at the sky again. He seemed to be thinking about something. Then he laughed. “I can never know this world.”

“What?”

“How long has it been since you started Elder Lord?”

“.....”

This was the first time that Crockta realized that the man was a user. Crockta watched him with wide eyes. The man was still smiling. “Around three months...”

“What about this place?”

“Not even five days.”

“Did you...”

Suddenly, Crockta saw a familiar face behind the man. Blackmore, now a cold body lying in the middle of the battlefield. Crockta rushed over.

“Blackmore...!”

His abdomen was pierced, but his face looked serene. There was an unknown smile on his face.

“Blackmore...”

His heart was pained. No matter what he used to be, Crockta thought of him as a man who loved both his songs and his hometown. He was a minstrel who admired Crockta’s song and recorded his inspiration.

“You are sad because he is dead,” the man said from behind. “Even though he is a NPC?”

Crockta turned to him. The man wasn’t laughing or ridiculing him. He had a lonely smile on his face. Crockta replied, “Any death on the battlefield is sad.”

“.....”

Crockta was well aware of this. Whether they were an enemy or ally, all deaths caused sadness in someone.

He saw the residents and orcs running over in the distance. The battle seemed to be completely finished. Ingram and Jeremy’s face also appeared. All of them had won. Only Blackmore remained here as a cold body.

It would have been nice if he had lived to the end. Together, they could sing and celebrate the victory. It was also possible to create new songs together. Crockta suppressed his sorrow and got up.

The man said, “Crockta, listen.”

“.....?”

“There is the Temple of the Fallen God in the north.”

What was he saying? Crockta looked at the man. The man still had an unknown smile on his face.

"If all these deaths are truly sad..." He turned around. "Go to the Temple of the Fallen God."

"What..."

Crockta tried to grab him but he was already walking away.

".....!"

The space seemed to fold and he suddenly appeared in a distant place. Crockta gazed grimly after him. He didn't even know the man's name.

"Temple of the Fallen God...?" Crockta muttered. But there was no time to think about it any further. Jeremy and Ingram were running towards Crockta.

"Brother! You're safe!" Jeremy stood beside Crockta and fell silent as he discovered Blackmore's body.

"....."

Ingram walked up to Blackmore. He kneeled down and stroked Blackmore's cheeks with wet eyes. His hands rose to cover his eyes. Blackmore and countless other residents had died. Everybody grabbed the body of someone they knew and sobbed uncontrollably. The battlefield, Chesswood was filled with grief.

It was a sad war. They had won the war, but the sorrow was all theirs.

# **CHAPTER 50**

## **AND THEN...**

---

The war ended. Chesswood had won, after their many great sacrifices.

The funerals for the dead didn't last long because of the hunger of the living.

"It is a big deal."

The residents rushed over to the ruined villages. Everything they built had turned into ash. Edelweiss supported the other villages, but there was a limit to the amount of food and supplies that could be shared.

Then a merchant company appeared, as if they had been waiting for the war to finish. They entered the ruined Chesswood with daily necessities, food, and building supplies. A memorandum was given to those who couldn't pay the price.

All of them signed it. The residents who almost lost their lives had no qualms about risking their lives for their future.

Crockta frowned as he asked, "Derek?"

"Well, yes."

Jeremy replied.

Derek was involved in the rebuilding process of the collapsed Chesswood and spread out his influence as a result. Now most of the residents of Chesswood were debtors who owed him.

Crockta didn't ask anything more. He didn't like Derek's behavior, but there was nothing he could do. Beyond the good in the world, there was also selfishness and malice. If he had to choose, then he would prefer the former over the latter.

Derek bought the equipment from the dead users for more than their value.

"I see, this is how Derek works."

“Yes. He does whatever he wants.”

After the situation was settled, Crockta looked for the users who helped Chesswood. They didn't explain about the video because they thought Crockta was a NPC. They just said that they heard rumors of an honorable orc and came to help. Crockta inwardly laughed.

“Thank you for the help Iron.”

“No. I just did what I had to do.”

Iron and Crockta shook hands. Iron was very gentle when he wasn't acting like a crazy necromancer. His attitude as he shook hands had no error, and even the angle of his line of sight was perfect.

This was the person who decimated a clan alone? Crockta felt admiration towards him. Iron sent him a mysterious smile and said, “This is my business card...”

“Yes...?”

“Ah, I made a mistake.” He flinched due to his habit of automatically stretched out his hand. “Please don't pay attention to it. Huhuhuhu.”

“Ah, yes...”

“Crockta, people like us will develop a deeper flavor as time passes, just like wine ripens.”

“Yes...?”

“It was great to meet you. You are a man that is like a bunch of burgundy grapes shining under the sun. I want to meet you again, just like opening the bottle of wine that I saved for the moment when it has the best flavor.”

“...T-Thank you.”

Iron ran his finger over his eyebrows and then pointed it at the sky.

“Adios Amigo!”

“Ah, yes... Take care of yourself.”

Iron laughed and turned away. He never looked back, just waving his hand high in the sky as he left. It seemed like this situation had inspired something. Crockta wanted to see him off, but then he felt a gaze on his from behind.

“That mister...?”

“That necromancer would have no problem joining our team if he has such a concept.”

“A nice guy.”

Another group that helped Chesswood, F4, admired Iron.

Crockta greeted them, “Thanks to you, I was able to defend the village.” At Crockta’s words, the warrior Bob emerged to represent the group.

“Honorable orc Crockta, do you see this?”

“Huh?”

Bob held out his sword, the so-called X-Geiger. The sword was vibrating. As Crockta looked closer, Bob was lightly shaking the sword with fine wrist snaps.

“X-Geiger is crying out in response to your hot soul.”

“.....?”

What was this?

“Your hot heart has protected this peaceful village from the invaders! It allowed X-Geiger to lead us here!”

“.....!”

“Crockta, my X-Geiger is always thirsty. X-Geiger isn’t thirsty for water, alcohol, nor the enemy’s blood. My X-Geiger drinks...! Hup...!”

The elf Elia covered Bob’s mouth. Bob and Elia struggled for a while. Instead of them, the bearded magician Joseph stepped forward.

"I am the great sage. Honorable orc Crockta, this great sage has something to say to you."

"Yes, Great Sage."

"Keep the peace of Middle Earth."

"Middle Ea... rth?"

"You have to destroy the ring...!"

Crockta gave up thinking. Then it was Gary's turn. The man with dark eyebrows hit Crockta's shoulder. It was an intense gaze.

"Crockta."

"Yes."

"Be well. We will be enemies when we meet again next time."

Then he dramatically turned around.

"....."

Why would they be enemies, what...? Crockta couldn't understand, but they seemed like people who really enjoyed Elder Lord. He bowed to express his appreciation.

"Aren't they crazy over there...?"

"Yes..."

The Orc Users Brotherhood shook their heads as they watched the scene. No matter how realistic the game was, there were some people who got too caught up in the concept. After speaking to F4, Crockta stood in front of the orcs.

"....."

"....."

Their eyes met. It was enough. The passionate eye contact between orcs!

Someone hit their thick chest and yelled, “Bul’tar——! I’m alive! Brother!”

“Bul’tar——! Stay alive, Brothers!”

They grabbed each other’s hands and slammed their shoulders against each other. Crockta also grabbed the hand of one of the orc brothers. It was close to a battle of strength.

“It was an honorable fight——!”

“No one can stop the way of the orcs!”

“Victory and glory! If I can’t live then I would rather die——!”

“Bul’tar! An honorable death rather than a subservient life!”

The orcs shouted together.

“Waaahhhhhh!”

“Bul’tarrrr!”

“Kuaaaah!”

Soon everyone was standing shoulder to shoulder. Crockta started to sing, “We are orcs! The mighty orcs!”

All the orcs sang along.

“You’ll be in trouble if you mess with us! The great warriors have appeared!”

“Humans, get lost! Elves, get lost! Dwarves, get lost! You guys too!”

“Pretty women? Warriors have no need for a woman! We are great orcs, great warriors!”

“We are orcs! The mighty orcs!”

“You’ll be in trouble if you mess with us!”

The harsh harmonies shook the earth! The F4 group shook their heads as they watched the exciting festival of the orc users.

“We still have manners.”

“They sold their soul to the concept.”

“That is ‘real’...”



Crockta said farewell to the users and climbed Edelweiss' hill with Jeremy. The tall hill looked over the villages of Chesswood spread out in a checkered pattern.

Blackmore was buried here. It was a short relationship. They had only walked together for a while, but it was enough time to feel his inner nature. He was a good man. On his grave, Crockta set down the musical instrument that Blackmore always carried around with him.

Crockta declared, “Jeremy.”

“Huh?”

“Where do people go if they die?”

Jeremy shrugged. “Well, I don’t know. Won’t he go to Heaven because he died for others?”

“Heaven...”

Yes.

Blackmore had gone to Heaven. Would it be Heaven if he was scattered around Elder Lord’s servers as packets of data?

Crockta looked at Jeremy. His face was tinged with the glow of the sun. Jeremy was a man who always grunted and spoke a lot. However, his eyes were currently red. Was it because of the glow or not?

Jeremy started to whistle. It was Blackmore’s song. The melody of the minstrel who

longed for his hometown covered the hill as Jeremy whistled. Was someone whispering the words along with the whistle? Was Jeremy, hiding his wet eyes, just an electronic signal calculated by a computer? Was his grief just converted game data?

'If all these deaths are truly sad, go to the Temple of the Fallen God.'

The man's voice popped into his head.

Crockta walked towards a large rock on a corner of the hill. He used Ogre Slayer on it, slicing the enormous rock into the shape of a cross. He moved it and set it down on Blackmore's grave.

Crocka carved an epitaph for Blackmore using the tip of the sword. He was dead, so this was the only thing Crockta could do.

Jeremy spoke from behind Crockta, "Crockta."

He had always called Crockta 'Orc brother'. It was strange hearing Jeremy's voice call his name. Crockta looked at Jeremy. "Boss sent me some information about those bastards."

"I see."

"Brother, whatever you do, I would like to go with you."

Jeremy's eyes were serious. Crockta laughed.

"What, why are you laughing? Don't get me wrong, I just don't like those guys."

"I didn't say anything."

"Your eyes look awful," Jeremy grumbled.

Crockta completed the gravestone. Jeremy approached and touched the words. "I'll go to hell anyway, so I will never meet you again."

A minstrel who matched Heaven, Blackmore.

"Goodbye, Minstrel Brother"

Crockta and Jeremy left Blackmore's grave. It was another farewell. As the wind blew, the sound of Blackmore's instrument rang through the hills. The clear sound was heard.

Crockta and Jeremy waved their hands in response.



Derek signed the paper.

"Good work."

"It is nothing."

Ever since Jeremy left, Derek had another subordinate doing his role. Derek leaned his elbow on the office table and touched his chin.

"What did Jeremy reply?"

"He will watch the orc a little more."

"Huhu."

Derek laughed.

He didn't believe it. Jeremy was probably excited by Crockta, and wanted to go together with him more. Jeremy was such a person. He pretended to be cold-blooded and rough, but he couldn't easily shake it off once he felt affection for someone.

"...Boss, will this really result in some money?"

"If you open up your mind, then you will see the path."

"How do you know to invest in this?"

"If you are talking about the reconstruction project, of course I don't know. That's why I will recollect it later."

Derek grabbed a piece of paper and started writing a letter. The recipient was Jeremy.

“Investment doesn’t necessarily mean monetary gain.”

“.....?”

“Keep this in mind. Preparing for future risks can also be called an investment from a broad perspective.” Derek continued to move his pen. The length of the letter got longer. “In order to figure out the profits, I need to know the anxiety factors.”

“Anxiety factors...?”

Derek raised the letter instead of answering. He placed it in an envelope and sealed it with candle wax. He extended it to the man.

“Do you understand that I know who will betray me later?”

“.....”

“Take care of it.”

“I understand.”

The man nodded. Derek’s expression indicated that there should be no more questions asked. The subordinate immediately retreated and left Derek’s office. The door closed and Derek buried himself in his chair.

He recalled Jeremy’s face. He had been a boy living in the rough back alleys that grew up into a fine, young man. Jeremy grew so well that he was about to break the line that Derek had hung around his neck.

“One day it would come.”

Derek smiled. The feast had to end one day. Once the feast was over, the table would be cleaned up.



PtF by: traitorATZEN